

May 6, 2013

Dear Mary,

As chairman of the American Progressive Bag Alliance (APBA) and employee of Hilex Poly, I have been following the discussion taking place in Portland to potentially ban plastic grocery bags. As Portland's Sustainability Task Force continues to explore options for educating residents on plastic bag reduction, I wanted to share with you the data that we've collected on plastic bag recycling and the positive implications it can have on our communities, the economy and the environment.

Our industry agrees that litter, in general, is a problem but implementing a bag ban would not address the issue of litter in a meaningful way. [A recent statement](#) distributed by Environmental Resources Planning, a professional firm that conducts scientifically-based litter studies, noted that when litter studies are conducted by professionally trained staff rather than volunteers, **plastic bag litter ranges between 0.5 percent and 2 percent of total litter collected.**

APBA is an organization of plastic bag manufacturers, members of which work to make a positive change in our communities by promoting increased recycling of plastic bags, as well as their proper use, reuse, recovery and disposal. That's why our members are taking a responsible approach and working with retailers across the nation to offer bins for residents to deposit their plastic bag and wraps for recycling. In fact, Hilex Poly was able to recycle more than 35 million pounds of post-consumer plastic last year through its retailer collection program, which eliminated millions of bags from going to landfills.

Recycling continues to be a growing trend in communities across the nation, and plastic bag recycling programs in particular are a proven success. [According to the U.S. EPA's 2010 municipal solid waste study](#), the recycling rate of polyethylene bags, sacks and wraps was 14.7 percent, a 23.8 percent increase from the rate in 2009, and has grown in nine out of the last 10 years. Overall, three million tons of polyethylene bags, sacks and wraps were recycled in 2010. Lastly, surveys show that 90 percent of people reuse 40-60 percent of their bags for bin liners, pet waste, storage or other uses.

Actions taken by cities and states across the country demonstrate the desire for comprehensive recycling programs. Just last year, city officials in Southampton Town, NY and Corpus Christi, TX decided to adopt an expanded plastic bag recycling program in lieu of a plastic bag ban. These community recycling programs support [more than 1 million men and women who are part of the recycling industry](#). Our industry alone supports more than [30,800 American jobs, including more than 100 in Maine](#).

In addition to the economic benefits, recycling serves as the best solution to some of the environmental issues we are facing as a nation. Plastic bag recycling reduces the need to harvest virgin materials for new plastic bag development, and provides a sustainable solution that keeps additional waste from going to the landfills. Plastic grocery bags require 40 percent less energy and four percent less water to manufacture than paper bags. I've attached a fact sheet on the benefits of plastic bag recycling and the impacts of anti-bag legislation – I encourage you to review the information as you consider anti-plastic bag legislation.

We support customer choice at checkout – paper, plastic or reusable. But we think it's critical that residents are armed with the facts in order to make a decision that's best for them, and best for their families. I hope this information was helpful in describing why recycling is a better option and bag legislation is simply put, bad public policy.

I ask that you please consider the alternatives to anti-bag laws in order to preserve consumer choice, jobs and our industry. I appreciate the time you have taken to read this note. I hope it was helpful and that you can use these facts in your public education campaign. Please feel free to use me as a resource or reach out to me at any point to discuss plastic bag recycling options.

Sincerely,

Mark T. Daniels

Mark Daniels
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SVP Sustainability & Environmental Policy, Hilex Poly Co. LLC

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