

Reuse of plastic shopping bags and the unintended consequences of bans and taxes

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Who are the Progressive Bag Affiliates of the American Chemistry Council?



The **American Chemistry Council (ACC)** member companies make the products that make modern life possible, while working to protect the environment, public health and the security of our nation.



The **Progressive Bag Affiliates (PBA)** of the ACC represents the major bag manufacturers, resin producers and bag recyclers.



We are committed to creating positive change in our communities by **promoting the increased recycling of plastic bags**, as well as their proper use, reuse and disposal.





Three Basic Policy Choices



Tax to elimination—Ireland and Seattle



Ban—San Francisco, Malibu, Maui,
Manhattan Beach, Westport



Reduce, Reuse, Recycle—California,
New York, Rhode Island, Chicago



Tax to elimination



Ireland imposed tax on plastic bags in 2002; currently .22€

Seattle passed a tax in July 2008
20¢ per bag plastic and paper

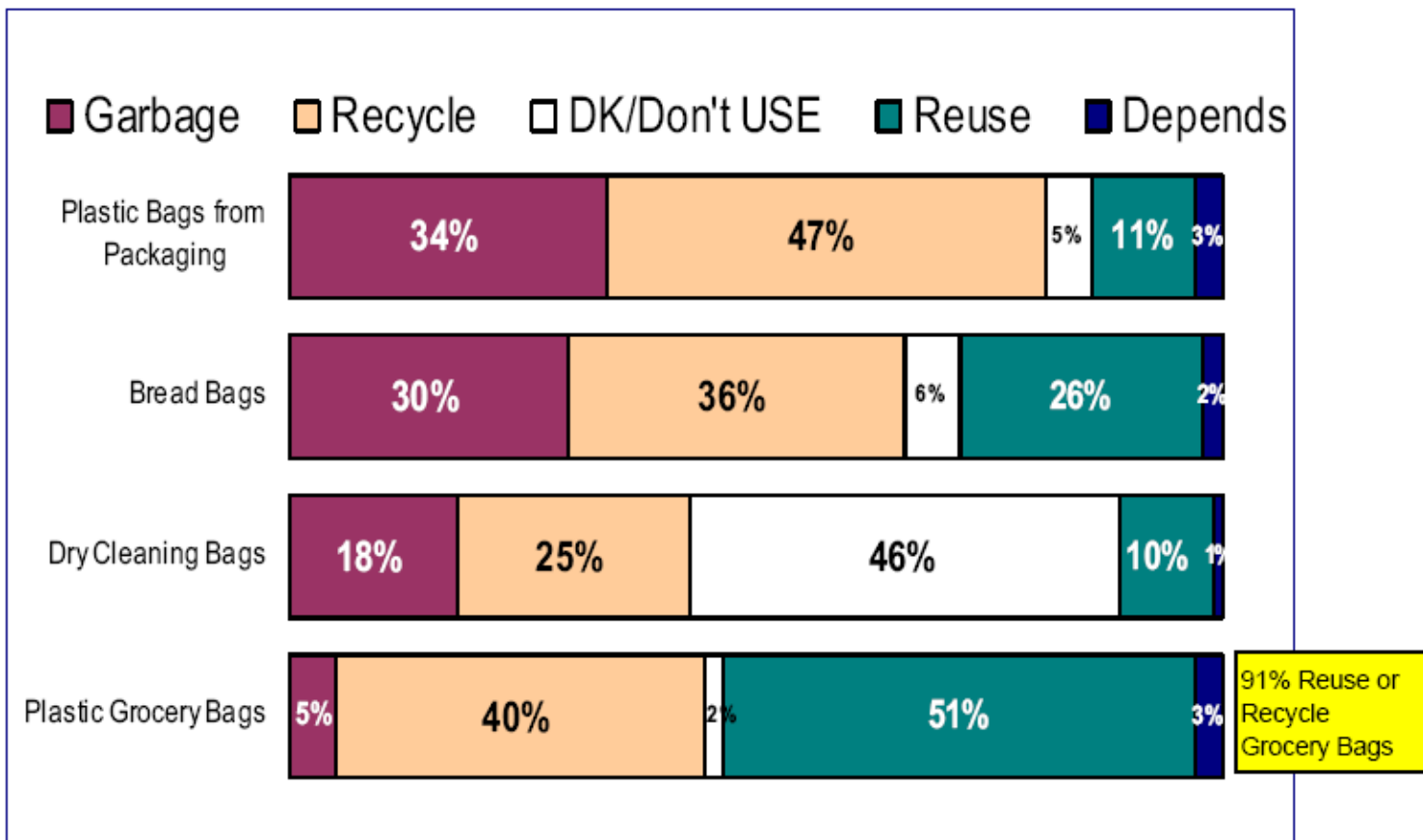


Overwhelming REUSE of plastic bags

MORE THAN 90% of Americans Reuse their Plastic Bags!



Seattle Data on Reuse Recycling





Reuse is so common products have sprung up!



Unintended Consequences



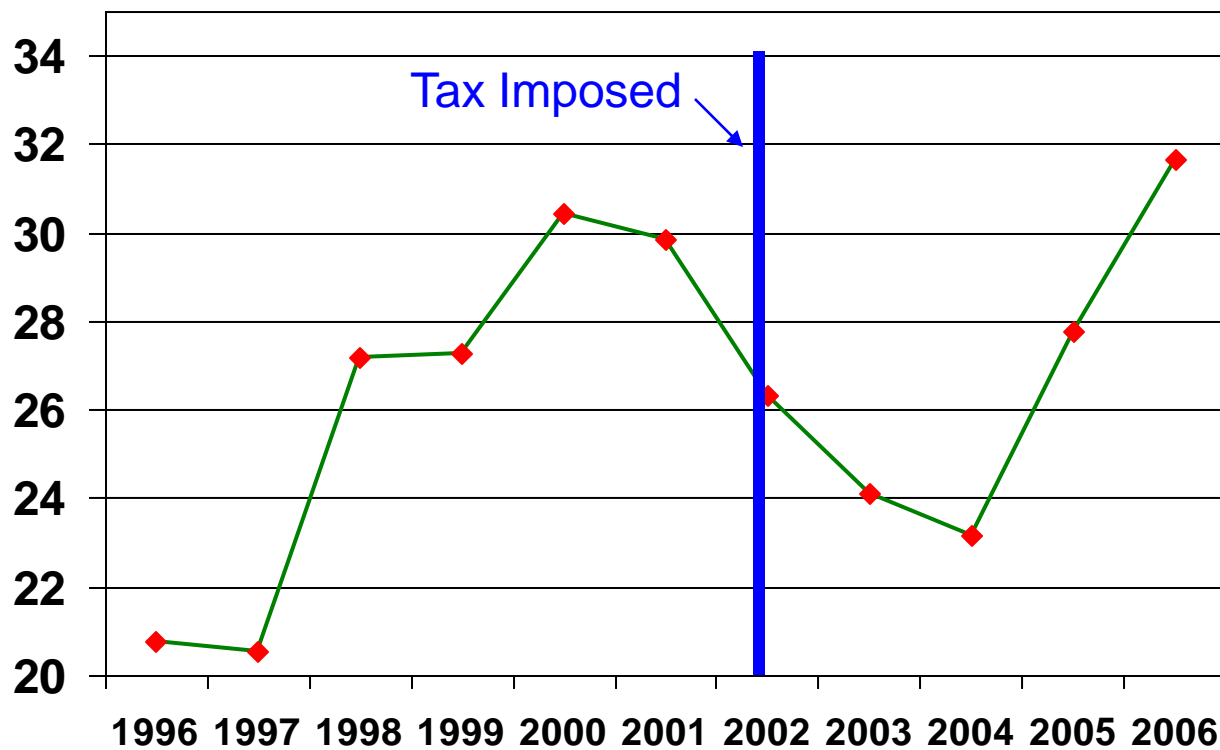
Ireland is often cited as having *reduced* plastic grocery bag usage by 90+% after taxing each bag.

Not told when the statistic is cited is that **sales of other plastic bags shot up 400%** as consumers were forced to purchase replacement bags for the grocery bags they once were able to reuse.

Unintended Consequences



Total Ireland Bag Imports (thousands of tonnes)





Ban on Plastic Bags



Ban—San Francisco effective Nov. 2007

Recent bans passed—Malibu CA, Maui,
Manhattan Beach CA, Westport CT



Study of Grocery Bag Use in San Francisco

- All food chains affected by the ordinance have switched back to paper bags
- The number of consumers bringing their own bags was judged to be minimal, and not greater than in other cities
- Paper use was judged to be excessive.

Source: Use-less-stuff.com (Sept., 2008)





Boustead Lifecycle Assessment: Results

	Impact Summary of Various Bag Types		
	(Carrying Capacity Equivalent to 1000 Paper Bags)		
	Paper (30% Recycled Fiber)	Compostable Plastic	Polyethylene
Total Energy Usage (MJ)	2622	2070	763
Fossil Fuel Use (kg)	23.2	41.5	14.9
Municipal Solid Waste (kg)	33.9	19.2	7.0
Greenhouse Gas Emissions (CO ₂ Equiv. Tons)	0.08	0.18	0.04
Fresh Water Usage (Gal)	1004	1017	58



Qualitative Study of Grocery Bag Use in San Francisco

- Bag and film recycling opportunities reduced
- “In some cases, plastic bag recycling bins have been removed”
- “The plastic bag recycling bins that were still available in San Francisco contained dry cleaning bags, produce bags, and bags from non-grocery retailers.”



Source: Use-less-stuff.com Sept 08.



Recycling is the Answer

California was the first state in the nation to establish recycling as a smart policy decision, **mandating** or **requiring** plastic bag recycling programs. Recently followed by New York, Rhode Island, New York City, Chicago

And many large grocery and retail chains have implemented at-store recycling programs nationwide.





Recycling is the Answer

Across the nation, plastic bag recycling is catching on.

In 2006, the recycling of plastic bags and wraps shot up to 812 million pounds, a **24% INCREASE** in a single year.



Momentum continues to build.

People are recycling plastic bags like never before.





Recycling is the Answer

In addition to recycling plastic grocery and retail bags, these programs allow shoppers to recycle their plastic **dry cleaning bags, newspaper bags, and bread bags as well as wraps from paper towels, napkins, diapers and toilet paper.**

Banning plastic bags would **eliminate programs to recycle** other products that are currently recycled along with plastic bags.





Recycling is the Answer

The Progressive Bag Affiliates (PBA) offers a wealth of resources and expertise to **assist communities** in developing effective recycling programs.

We have developed educational materials for grocery stores and **promoted plastic bag recycling** throughout the country.

For example, the PBA recycling toolkit is being used by grocers and retailers around the nation as a reference for determining the best ways to deploy effective recycling in stores.

<http://www.plasticbagrecycling.org>





Recycling is the Answer



Plastic bags can be recycled into **park benches**, **decking** for boardwalks and **porches**, **pallets** and even back in to **plastic bags**.



Recycling is the Answer

**PLASTICS. TOO
VALUABLE TO
WASTE. RECYCLE.SM**





Together,
We Can Make a Difference

The Progressive Bag Affiliates is committed to **recycling**.

We want to **increase the infrastructure** to do so.

