

# 10 QUESTIONS TO ASK THOSE WHO WANT TO BAN OR TAX PLASTIC BAGS

## **How many Washington jobs will be at risk if we ban plastic bags?**

More than 1,000 Washingtonians are employed by plastic bag manufacturing, distributing and recycling companies across the state.

## **What are U.S. plastic bags made of? What are reusables made of?**

American-made plastic bags are 100 percent recyclable and made from natural gas. Reusable bags, on the other hand, are made overseas using foreign oil.

## **Will banning plastic bags increase use of other plastics?**

Nine out of ten people say they reuse plastic bags for every day uses. Banning them will push consumers to buy heavier gauge plastic bags to replace them.

## **What's the carbon footprint of plastic bags vs. paper or reusables?**

2,000 plastic bags weigh 30 pounds; 2,000 paper bags weigh 280 pounds. Paper takes up more space in landfills and uses more energy and water to produce and transport. Plastic bags create 80 percent less waste. Reusables are manufactured overseas and are imported.

## **Can reusable bags be recycled?**

No. Reusable bags are not recyclable.

## **How many heavy-plastic reusable bags are imported to the U.S. each year?**

Over 500 million are imported annually from countries like China. [New York Magazine](#) wrote “reusable shopping bags have proliferated so greatly that ecoactivists are worried about surplus sacks winding up in landfills.” (12/4/11)

## **How many times does a cloth reusable bag need to be used to be a ‘greener’ option than plastic?**

393 times, according to a U.K. government study.

## **Why not increase recycling instead?**

Recycling addresses all forms of plastic films from newspaper and dry cleaning wraps to toilet paper packaging. The U.S. EPA reports that 14.1 percent of bags, sacks and wraps are recycled, a jump of 24 percent alone between 2009 and 2010. Recycling is working and creating green jobs. There will be no market to recycle these films if a ban is passed.

## **What percentage of litter is made up of plastic bags?**

Various litter studies have consistently shown that plastic bags make up only one to two percent of all litter. Singling out one product will not address the greater issue of litter.

## **Are plastics bags the most abundant form of litter in the marine environment?**

NOAA's Fifth International Marine Debris Conference last year and its draft of the conference's Honolulu Strategy highlights that the most pressing concern is educating people to reduce derelict fishing gear and general solid waste – not specific products such as plastic bags.

Learn more: [www.bagtheban.com](http://www.bagtheban.com)

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