



# From the Mayor's Desk

## The Humble Plastic Bag

This week I received an interesting email regarding plastic bags and I started to once again revalue their significance.

Apparently there are between 500 billion and a trillion plastic bags consumed each year in the world (National Geographic News September 2, 2003)

It costs more to recycle a bag than to produce a new one – in fact, less than 1% of bags are recycled (Christian Science Monitor News Paper)

The Department of Environment in San Francisco stated that it costs \$4000 to process and recycle 1 ton of plastic bags. These can then be sold on the commodities market for \$32

Did you know that most of the world's plastic ends up in the ocean and not landfills? (US National Academy of Sciences)

The National Marine Debris Monitoring Program in America stated that over 10% of debris washed up on the US coastline consisted of plastic bags

As time goes by plastic bags degrade in the light and in doing so, break down into smaller, more toxic petro-polymers which will eventually contaminate soils and waterways (CNN.com/technology November 16, 2007)

Did you know that nearly 200 different species of sea life including whales, dolphins, seals and turtles die due to plastic bags (World Wildlife Fund Report 2005) and many of them die as a result of ingesting the bags?

What can we do, you may now be asking yourself?

- if we use a cloth bag, we can save 6 bags a week
- and that will be 24 bags a month or
- 288 bags a year OR
- An average of 22,176 bags in an average life time

**IF ONE OUT OF FIVE PEOPLE IN OUR COUNTRY DID THIS WE COULD SAVE 1,330,560,000 BAGS OVER OUR LIFE TIME**

Countries around the world are either in the process of banning the use of plastic bags or have already done so – Bangladesh, China, Europe etc.

On 27th March 2007 San Francisco became the first American city to ban the use of plastic bags (NPR.org)

As plastic bags are made from a substance containing oil, by reducing their use we can decrease foreign oil dependency (CNN.com/technology November 16, 2007)

It is predicted that China will save 37 million barrels of oil each year due to their ban of free plastic bags (CNN.com/asia January 9, 2008)



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