



BYOBAG: MARIN

A project of the County of Marin, EcoMom Alliance, Green Sangha, Ireuse.org and Teens Turning Green

Problems

- Californians use 19 billion plastic carryout bags annually, or 600 per second.
- Fewer than 5% of these bags are recycled.
- Marin residents throw away 138 million bags annually; these end up in our landfill, streets, and parks.
- Plastic bags and their scraps are among the most frequently-found items of litter on street and coastline cleanups, and in scientific trawls of the Pacific Ocean.
- Paper bags generate 70% more air and 50 times more water pollutants than plastic bags
- Paper bags use 4 times as much energy to construct compared to a plastic bag
- Paper bags use 84 times as much energy to recycle compared to a plastic bag
- Paper bags use more space in landfills than plastic bags
- Certain chemicals found in plastics (especially BPA, phthalates, PFOA, PFOS, polystyrene, and additives such as antimony, cadmium, and lead) are associated with a who's who of modern disorders, including asthma, cancer, diabetes, obesity, premature puberty, and reproductive failure.
- In 1999, 14 million trees were cut to produce the 10 billion paper grocery bags used by Americans that year alone

What We're Doing About It

Marin County hopes to lead the nation in eliminating environmentally irresponsible single-use plastic bags. Supervisor Charles McGlashan, working with colleague Susan Adams, has authored an ordinance that will ban throw-away plastic and paper bags. With support from community groups and businesses, we can ensure its passage on Earth Day 2010.

This campaign, the first of its kind in the country, is raising public awareness and creating the support and political will needed to pass this legislation. Teens Turning Green (TTG) has partnered with Bay Area based Butler Shine Stern & Partners, an award-winning ad agency, to brand the campaign, enhancing its image and effect. Teens Turning Green, EcoMom Alliance, Ireuse.org and Green Sangha are partners in forming this movement to contribute to the health of our planet.

Goals

- Decrease waste
- Reduce pollution of air, soil, and water
- Save resources (oil, trees, water)
- Decrease litter
- Reduce costs for stores (each grocery store plastic bag costs a penny; paper bags cost 5-8 cents)
- Improve city and town efficiency (litter clean-up takes city employees' time when all municipalities are working hard to balance their budgets)
- Reinforce the community ethic of stewardship and care for the commons

What Stores Can Do

- Proclaim BYOBAG Marin Day (e.g., press release; signs outside store; displays at each check-out counter; in-house newsletter messages; check-out "stuffers"). Our next date is Saturday February 20 from 11 am– 3pm (and each third Saturday of the month through April). We can provide volunteers at your store, signage, cards to go on registers or art work.
- Reinforce the message to BYOBAG on the 3rd Saturday of each month
- Make reusable bags available and prominently displayed at check-out counters.
- Give a generous credit for each reusable bag if a customer brings one on Saturday February 20 (we suggest a minimum of 25 cents, to catch customers' attention and reinforce the point).
- Sign a letter endorsing a county-wide ban on free throw-away bags at retail stores and markets.

Benefits To Stores

- Save money on bags (grocery stores in particular run on very thin profit margins)
- Meet organizational objectives to improve their green profile
- Enhance respect in the community by taking leadership in the drive to zero waste

KEY DATES TO REMEMBER

- BYOBAG Days: Saturday 2/20 • 3/20 • 4/17
• all stores are asked to invite customers to BYOBAG