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June 2015 EcoFacts



Plastic Bags + MRFs = Bad News!

Never put plastic bags in with your mixed recyclables, because they cannot be processed in a MRF. Although plastic bags are 100% recyclable, they get tangled up in the equipment at MRFs and create costly labor and repair time. Despite your best efforts to recycle plastic bags in your single stream container, they will be landfilled.

What Can You Do? Refuse to Use and Recycle Right

Evaluate your own use of plastic bags. According to The Wall Street Journal, the U.S. goes through 100 billion plastic shopping bags annually. An estimated 12 million barrels of oil is required to make that many plastic bags, and a single plastic bag can take up to 1,000 years to degrade. Refuse plastic bags at the store when they aren't needed, and carry your own reusable bag for the times when you really need one. If you have bags to recycle, place them in one of the collection bins at your local grocery store.



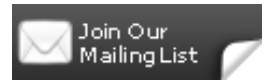
Policy

Some city council members for the City of Omaha have expressed interest in exploring a plastic bag ban.^[i] Some people believe bans are not as good as a tax because they shift the focus to paper bags rather than deterring the use of all single-use bags, as a tax would. Plus, a bag tax could fund environmental programs. Either way, we need to move away from the wasteful practice of single-use bags.

[i]<http://sierranebraska.org/2015/03/03/plastic-bag-proliferation-should-omaha-have-a-plastic-bag-ban/>

Visit www.wastecapne.org for all your recycling needs.





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