

Petition

“We the undersigned petition the Scottish Government to ban plastic carrier bags in Scotland and take serious action against plastic packaging in general.”

The Petitioners

Oban Plastic Bag Free! is a group of residents from Oban who are dedicated to providing retailers and consumers with information, education and counsel about plastic carrier bags and packaging and the devastation it causes to the environment.

Introduction

Plastic carrier bags and plastic packaging have a devastating effect on our natural environment. As petroleum based plastic does not bio-degrade, it remains a pollutant in our soils and water for ever.

Plastic is a danger to our wildlife, especially to our marine wildlife. Birds, sea turtles, seal lions, seals, dolphins and other animals become entangled in it or mistake it for food. Once it has degraded into minute plastic particles, it mimics zoo plankton and is easily ingested by fish and birds. In the central pacific gire, research has shown that there is six times more plastic by weight in this area than naturally occurring plankton.

Plastic is a way to transport Persistent Organic Pollutants (chlordane, PCB, DDT, and DDE to name a few). They attach to the surface area of plastic in the marine environment. We need to establish whether, upon ingestion, these plastics transfer chemicals to the food chain and thus accumulate in fatty tissues and organs. As humans are at the top of the marine food chain, this could be a major cause for concern.

Plasticizers are a group of chemicals that are added to plastic resins during the manufacturing process. It has been established that traces of these chemicals leach out when they come into contact with food or drink. It has also been established that some of these plasticizers are now known to be carcinogenic and endocrine disruptors.

Plastic is made out of oil, a finite and therefore very valuable resource. Plastic production uses 8% of all the world's oil production. At the current rate the world produces 200 million tons of plastic a year. Less than 3.5% is recycled.

Several countries have taken or are taking serious action against plastic carrier bags and packaging. Bangladesh, Ireland, Taiwan, France, West Bengal, Tanzania, Switzerland, Rwanda, Pakiistan, Denmark, Germany, South Africa, Italy, Australia, India, Somalia, Botswana, Philippines, Uganda, Kenya,, Japan, Turkey Zanzibar, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Belgium, South Korea, Singapore, Sweden, Bhutan, Malta, China...

We feel the Scottish government needs to follow their inspired and courageous example.

We therefore strongly appeal to the Scottish government to take prompt action and:

- ban plastic as a material for disposable products.
- encourage and reward businesses who ban free disposable plastic carrier bags and packaging.
- provide/create facilities where all plastic can be fully recycled.
- inform the public of the dangers of disposable plastic products.

Sources: Plasticbagfree.com, Waste Online, Mindfully.org, Algalita, Greenpeace Ocean Defenders, London.gov.uk, Newport.gov.uk, New Scientist, Epa.gov, Ecologycenter.org, Environmental Research Foundation, UNEP, Environment.gov.au, IISD, American Chemical Society and many more.

