



News Release

For Immediate Release

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PLASTIC BAG MANUFACTURERS SET AGGRESSIVE RECYCLED CONTENT GOAL

\$50 MM Investment to Reduce Energy Use, Greenhouse Gas Emissions

ARLINGTON, VA (April 21, 2009) – Today the Progressive Bag Affiliates of the American Chemistry Council announced a landmark effort to dramatically increase recycling of plastic bags. The move was applauded by Walgreen Co., the nonprofit Keep America Beautiful, and numerous retailers and retail associations.

The Full Circle Recycling Initiative sets an aggressive goal of 40 percent recycled content in all plastic bags by 2015, including at least 25 percent postconsumer recycled plastic. Participants will each separately decide how to support the goal, but overall, industry is expected to invest nearly \$50 million to overhaul manufacturing processes and on an annual basis will collect 470 million pounds of recycled plastic for the manufacture of new bags. In addition, this effort will reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 463 million pounds, conserve enough energy (natural gas) to heat 200,000 homes, and reduce waste by 300 million pounds every year.

"Today we mark a milestone as we welcome a new plastic bag for the 21st century," said Cal Dooley, President & CEO of the American Chemistry Council. "This bold move will conserve natural resources, reduce waste and stimulate plastics recycling throughout the nation. Plastic bag makers have listened to policy makers and customers and are launching an initiative that will make a lasting positive impact on American communities."

"Walgreens applauds this important effort to encourage more consumer recycling and to work with bag manufacturers to help strengthen goals to make plastic bags more sustainable," said Michael Polzin, director of external communications for Walgreen Co. "These types of proactive, innovative green programs are important steps in helping reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve the environment."

The recycling of plastic bags and wraps has escalated in recent years to an estimated 830 million pounds in 2007. This represents a 27 percent increase from 2005. Still, additional material will need to be collected for manufacturers to reach their goal. As in recent years, the Progressive Bag Affiliates will continue working with major grocery and retail chains to increase at-store programs that allow shoppers to bring back their used plastic bags and wraps.

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California's 2007 at-store plastic bag recycling mandate and similar laws in New York and Rhode Island will help fuel continued growth in recycling. Similar measures are being considered by other localities across the nation. Consumers can do their part by recycling their plastic bags at participating stores and asking for bags with recycled content.

"This is a significant commitment by the plastic bag industry to reduce waste through increased recycling and use of recycled materials," said Matthew McKenna, president and CEO of Keep America Beautiful. "A greater commitment to recycling by consumers and businesses will ultimately prevent litter and beautify our communities, while at the same time conserving energy and natural resources. We look forward to working with the industry to make this program a success."

About the Progressive Bag Affiliates

The Progressive Bag Affiliates of the American Chemistry Council promote the responsible use and recycling of plastic bags. The PBA recycling toolkit is being used by retailers around the nation as a reference for deploying effective recycling solutions in stores. More information on recycling plastic bags, including tips for consumers and tools for retailers, is available on www.plasticbagrecycling.org.

To learn more, read our [FAQs](#), view a [diagram](#) illustrating the plastic bag recycling process, get [tips on how to recycle](#) more plastic bags and wraps, or visit our "[Too Valuable to Waste](#)" recycling blog.

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