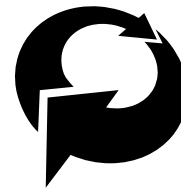


# Recyclable Bags vs. Oxo-Biodegradable Bags



**BRING IT BACK**  
YOUR STORE RECYCLES PLASTIC BAGS

## Biodegradable bags do not degrade any faster than recyclable bags in landfills.

- According to the Federal Trade Commission, materials in landfills degrade very slowly, if at all. This is because modern landfills are designed, according to law, to keep out sunlight, air, and moisture. This helps prevent pollutants from the garbage from getting into the air and drinking water and slows the decomposition of the trash. With materials like paper and food taking decades to decompose, it is difficult to substantiate a claim that a product normally disposed of in a landfill is biodegradable.<sup>1</sup>
- According to ASTM D6954, oxo-biodegradable polymers are excluded from consideration as acceptable environmentally biodegradable polymers.<sup>2</sup> Oxo-biodegradable bags may or may not break down into pieces at a faster rate than recyclable plastic bags and there is no proof they will degrade any faster than any other plastic bags in a landfill.

## It is environmentally responsible and easy to recycle plastic bags.

- Recyclable bags can be recovered from the solid waste stream and reused to manufacture another package or product through an established recycling program.<sup>1</sup> The bags can contain 100% virgin material or a combination of virgin material and recycled material.
- Recyclable bags are reprocessed and used to manufacture new products like low maintenance outdoor decking and railing, pallets, containers, crates, pipe, other building/construction items, and other plastic bags.<sup>3</sup>
- Plastic bags can be returned to any location that accepts grocery bags. The web site [www.plasticbagrecycling.org](http://www.plasticbagrecycling.org) lists locations by state.
- With increased education and environmental consciousness of consumers, no recyclable plastic bags need to go to the landfill.

## Biodegradable bags contaminate the recycling stream.

- Biodegradable plastics and plastics that degrade in oxygen or sunlight reduce the quality and impair the mechanical properties of finished products manufactured with recycled content.<sup>4</sup>
- Trex Company, one of the largest users of recycled plastics and the leading brand of low maintenance composite decking products, does not want biodegradable plastic introduced into the recycling stream because it could affect the quality of their product.<sup>5</sup>
- When oxo-biodegradable bags get mixed with recyclable bags they contaminate the recycling stream. This could result in recyclers refusing to collect ALL plastic bags. The end result would be that all plastic bags will be destined for the landfill.

## States are passing laws mandating recycling and defining what is truly biodegradable.

- In September 2008, the state of California passed a law which makes it illegal to market a bag as biodegradable unless it meets ASTM Standard D6400. Oxo-biodegradable bags do not meet ASTM D6400.<sup>6</sup>
- In June 2008, New York City passed a law requiring NYC stores that provide plastic carryout bags to accept plastic bags for recycling. As stated in the law, the reason for its existence is that plastic carryout bags and plastic film do not biodegrade. The law also says that bioplastics require a separate collection system and asks that they NOT be placed in recycling bins.<sup>7</sup>
- In December 2008, New York State passed a similar law.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Federal Trade Commission Green Guides ([www.ftc.gov/bcp/gnrule/guides980427.htm](http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/gnrule/guides980427.htm)) <sup>2</sup> ASTM International (American Society for Testing and Materials) <sup>3</sup> Progressive Bag Alliance "Top 10 Myths about Plastic Grocery Bags" <sup>4</sup> California Integrated Waste Management Board/California State University Study June 2007. <sup>5</sup> Letter written 9/26/08 by Raymond Hampton, Materials Sourcing Manager, at Trex Company. <sup>6</sup> California Assembly Bill 1972. <sup>7</sup> New York's Plastic Carryout Bag Recycling Law (Local Law 1 of 2008) <sup>8</sup> New York State Plastic Bag Reduction, Reuse and Recycling Law (A.11725/S.8643-A).

Recycling  
helps reduce the  
strain on our landfills.  
Return recyclable bags  
to your local retail  
store or outlet.

  
**continental** 1-800-325-0216  
products [www.continentalproducts.com](http://www.continentalproducts.com)