



THE BAG CHALLENGE!

- 1) How many bags on average does each person in the USA use per year?
- 2) About how many bags do we use in NJ each year?
- 3) What percentage of plastic bags are recycled per year?
- 4) Reusable bags can collect bacteria just like other fabrics. What removes more than 99.99% of the bacteria?
- 5) Bag fees reduce bag consumption by how much?
- 6) Pet waste - what if you have no single use disposable plastic shopping bags. What other kinds of plastic bags can you use to clean up pet waste?
- 7) Does the “chasing arrow” sign on a piece of plastic mean it is recyclable?
- 8) Does the Mercer County Improvement Authority recycle plastic bags?
- 9) Wouldn't it be fabulous if Mercer County passed a bag fee ordinance so merchants wouldn't have to stress about losing customers?
- 10) What can I do?



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THE BAG FACTS!

- 1) The average American uses about 500 plastic and/or paper bags per year. Based on EPA estimates, and Garbology by Edward Humes.
- 2) NJ has 8.8 million people (2012 census) and 8.8 million x 500 bags = 4.4 billion bags
- 3) The EPA Municipal Solid Waste Report 2010, page 9, table 7 shows that about 4.3% of all HDPE plastic bags are recycled.
- 4) “Assessment for the Potential of Cross Contamination of Food Products by Reusable Shopping Bags”, Gerba, Williams, Sinclair, June 9, 2010 states in the summary that “When meat juices were added to bags and stored in the trunks of cars for two hours the number of bacteria increased 10-fold indicating the potential for bacterial growth in the bags. Hand or machine washing was found to reduce the bacteria in bags by >99.99%.”
- 5) According to a San Jose City memo (November 20, 2012) a city wide survey by municipal employees showed a reduction of 90% in the amount of disposable bags purchased. Washington D.C., Ireland, and other cities, countries, and municipalities with bag fee laws have reported similar results.
- 6) Look at your groceries to find plenty of other plastic bags: bread bags, chip bags, toilet paper, and paper towel bags, bags inside cereal boxes, pasta bags, produce bags, and what about newspaper bags?
- 7) The “chasing arrow” symbol on a piece of plastic just identifies the type of plastic it is. It is a resin code, not a recycling code. The type of resin is indicated by the number inside the arrows.
- 8) The Mercer County Improvement Authority (according to <http://www.mcyanj.org/content/119/306/default.aspx>) specifically asks that recycled materials not be placed in plastic bags.
- 9) Yes!
- 10) Find your NJ Legislators at www.njleg.state.nj.us/ and tell them what you think! Stop using single use disposable bags - use any other reusable bag you have. Host a discussion/screening of bag it, talk to your local merchants about this, write to your township council members and county freeholders! Join the NJThinkOutsideTheBag coalition.