



## News Release

For Immediate Release

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### HAWAII COUNTY VETOES PROPOSED PLASTIC BAG BAN

#### *Mayor's Rational Decision Protects Public Interest and Opens the Door for Productive Debate*

ARLINGTON, VA (September 23, 2008) – Today the Progressive Bag Affiliates of the American Chemistry Council (PBA), a trade association representing the nation's leading plastic bag manufacturers, recyclers and resin producers, saluted Hawaii County Acting Mayor Dixie Kaetsu for her decision to veto a proposed ban on plastic bags. The mayor's veto reflects a broader national policy trend to reject plastic bag bans in favor of recycling and other sensible options. The PBA encourages Hawaii County to join with progressive communities throughout the country in adopting an aggressive plastic bag recycling program.

In a September 19 letter to the Hawaii County Council, Acting Mayor Kaetsu stressed that instead of bans, proper handling was the key to addressing the plastic bag issue. She wrote:

*"I believe it is better to work to change people's hearts so they change their own behavior rather than outlawing a commodity (plastic bags) that many people find useful. If we focus on educating our residents about the benefits of reusable bags along with proper disposal (reuse and recycling) of plastic bags, we will change attitudes and behaviors."*

Shari Jackson, director of the Progressive Bag Affiliates, lauded the mayor for her firm stance on this important environmental policy issue, "Plastic bags are too valuable to waste and should be recycled." Jackson continued, "By encouraging increased reuse and recycling of plastic bags we can help protect delicate ecosystems and work together to maintain cleaner communities."

Plastic bags are fully recyclable. Nationwide 812 million pounds of plastic bags and wrap were recycled in 2006, up 24 percent from the previous year. These valuable materials are used to make durable backyard decking products and new plastic bags.

The overwhelming trend nationally has been to implement plastic bag recycling programs. In 2007, California mandated in-store recycling programs, and similar measures were passed in this year in New York State, Rhode Island, Chicago, New York City and several New York counties. By contrast, San Francisco remains the only large jurisdiction in the United States to ban plastic bags.

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“PBA welcomes the opportunity to work with county officials, recyclers, waste management officials, retailers and other interested stakeholders to promote and expand plastic bag recycling in the county and throughout the State of Hawaii,” said Jackson.

### **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 determining the best ways to deploy effective recycling solutions in stores. Consumers, businesses and recyclers can find a wealth of information on plastic bag recycling at [www.plasticbagrecycling.org](http://www.plasticbagrecycling.org).

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*The American Chemistry Council (ACC) represents the leading companies engaged in the business of chemistry. ACC members apply the science of chemistry to make innovative products and services that make people's lives better, healthier and safer. ACC is committed to improved environmental, health and safety performance through Responsible Care<sup>®</sup>, common sense advocacy designed to address major public policy issues, and health and environmental research and product testing. The business of chemistry is a \$664 billion enterprise and a key element of the nation's economy. It is one of the nation's largest exporters, accounting for ten cents out of every dollar in U.S. exports. Chemistry companies are among the largest investors in research and development. Safety and security have always been primary concerns of ACC members, and they have intensified their efforts, working closely with government agencies to improve security and to defend against any threat to the nation's critical infrastructure.*

