



## News Release

For Immediate Release

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### PHILADELPHIA REJECTS TAX ON RECYCLABLE PLASTIC GROCERY BAGS

ARLINGTON, VA (May 18, 2009) – As a result of intense opposition from commercial and consumer advocates alike, a proposed 25-cent-per-bag tax on plastic and paper grocery bags failed on May 14 to pass the Philadelphia City Council. The tax could have added upward of \$400 annually to the average family's grocery bill.

The Progressive Bag Affiliates of the American Chemistry Council welcomed the outcome. "We are pleased that the City of Philadelphia chose not to take a punitive approach by taxing consumers during a recession," said Shari Jackson, director of the Progressive Bag Affiliates. "Consumers don't need to bear a tax in order to help protect the environment. Plastic bags are fully recyclable and can be recycled at many major grocery and retail chains in Philadelphia and across the United States. Plastic bags don't belong in roadways, they belong in the recycling bin."

About 830 million pounds of plastic bags and product wraps were recycled in this country in 2007, representing an increase of 27 percent from just two years prior. Recycled plastic bags and product wraps are used to make many useful products, including durable backyard decks, home building products and new bags, to name a few.

Recently, the nation's four leading makers of plastic carryout bags announced a landmark recycling goal of 40 percent recycled content, including 25 percent postconsumer material, in all plastic bags by 2015. When fully implemented, the [Full Circle Recycling Initiative](#) will reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 463 million pounds, conserve enough energy (mainly natural gas) to heat 200,000 homes, and reduce waste by 300 million pounds every year.

"Plastics, including plastic bags, are resources that are too valuable to waste," said Jackson. "We believe that increasing awareness and access to recycling programs is the most effective way to reduce waste, prevent litter and protect our environment for future generations." PBA is working with a Philadelphia-based coalition that includes the nonprofit Keep Philadelphia Beautiful on efforts to improve and expand recycling programs and to reduce *all* types of litter through education, training, and other programs.

#### About the Progressive Bag Affiliates

The Progressive Bag Affiliates of the American Chemistry Council promote the responsible use and recycling of plastic carryout 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. For more information, please visit [www.plasticbagrecycling.org](http://www.plasticbagrecycling.org).



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