



## News Release

For Immediate Release

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### **DELAWARE LEGISLATURE PASSES RECYCLING PROGRAM FOR PLASTIC BAGS**

#### *“The First State” Joins California, New York in Growing Recycling Trend*

ARLINGTON, VA (July 2, 2009) – The state of Delaware this week joined a growing national trend by passing legislation that expands consumer access to recycling plastic bags statewide. Governor Jack Markell is expected to sign House Bill Number 15; the new legislation will go into effect in August 2010.

The legislation requires large retailers and chain stores that offer plastic shopping bags to provide collection bins for recycling, thus expanding plastic bag recycling opportunities for shoppers across the state. By creating a uniform statewide recycling program and curtailing scattered and inconsistent local approaches, the law will better promote recycling statewide, and importantly, help provide places for consumers to recycle not just plastic shopping bags but a wide variety of plastic bags and product wraps, such as bags from dry cleaning, newspapers and bread as well as product wraps from paper towels, bathroom tissue and cases of soda. Under the new law, retailers also will provide reusable bags for consumers to purchase.

Plastic bag makers, who will be required to print a recycling message on all carryout bags and to provide educational materials to retailers, applauded the new law. “This is good news for Delaware’s citizens and for the environment,” said Shari Jackson of the American Chemistry Council’s Progressive Bag Affiliates. “More and more, lawmakers recognize that plastics are a valuable material that should be recycled.”

The recycling of plastic bags and wraps increased 27 percent nationwide from 2005 to 2007. Jackson pointed to numerous states and municipalities, including California, New York state, Rhode Island, Chicago, and Tucson that already have passed similar legislation. These new laws are expected to increase significantly the amount of plastic bags and wraps that are diverted from landfills and turned into new consumer products, such as durable decking, fencing, railings, shopping carts and new bags.

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Jackson noted that grocers, retailers and public officials across the country have partnered with the Progressive Bag Affiliates to promote in-store plastic bag recycling programs, which has been a key factor in increasing nationwide consumer participation.

Recently, the Progressive Bag Affiliates announced a landmark recycling goal of 40 percent recycled content, including 25 percent postconsumer material, in all plastic shopping 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.

### **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. To learn more about increasing plastic bag recycling, please visit [www.plasticbagrecycling.org](http://www.plasticbagrecycling.org).

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