



News Release

For Immediate Release

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STUDY: OVER SEVENTY PERCENT OF AMERICANS CAN RECYCLE PLASTIC BAGS AND WRAPS LOCALLY

WASHINGTON, DC (April 12, 2012) – A new study released today provides encouraging news about the state of plastics recycling in the U.S.: More than 91 percent of the U.S. population can recycle their plastic bags locally, and additionally, nearly 75 percent of people living in the U.S. can recycle other types of flexible plastic wraps in their own communities.

The study, which looked at flexible polyethylene film – a category that includes flexible plastic bags, sacks and many product wraps – identified over 15,000 drop-off locations that collect these items for recycling. The majority of collection centers are conveniently located in stores, frequently major grocery chains or retailers like Target and Lowe’s home improvement stores.

“[Plastic Film and Bag Recycling Collection: National Reach Study](#),” conducted by Moore Recycling Associates Inc., is believed to be the first study to examine consumers’ access to recycle flexible plastic packaging. A [separate study](#) released earlier this year found that the recycling of flexible plastics increased 50 percent over the last five years to reach [nearly 1 billion pounds annually](#) in the United States.

The National Reach Study also found that despite the prevalence of access to flexible plastic recycling programs, consumers are not yet using this infrastructure to its full potential.

“Plastic bags and wraps are a valuable resource that should be recycled after use,” said Steve Russell, vice president of plastics for the American Chemistry Council. “We’re thrilled that so many Americans have access to recycling, and we look forward to working to increase consumer awareness, so we can recycle even more of this material.”

Toward that end, the flexible plastics value chain recently came together to form the [Flexible Film Recycling Group](#) (FFRG), which is applying industry resources to boost consumer education; labeling of bags, films and wraps with recycling information; and infrastructure expansion.

“Education is the next critical step,” Russell said. “Awareness and convenience are key to changing behavior, and we frequently see that when awareness meets convenience, consumers are very willing to recycle their plastics.” (See **Consumer Tips on Next Page.**)

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To help increase awareness among consumers, the FFRG is working with GreenBlue's Sustainable Packaging Coalition to develop a "Store Drop-off" label specifically for flexible plastic packaging. For more information on the new label, see: <http://www.how2recycle.info/>.

To search for a drop-off location in your community, see www.plasticbagrecycling.org. For breaking news on advancements in plastics recycling, follow us on Twitter: @Recycle_Plastic.

What Every Consumer Should Know about Recycling Plastic Bags and Wraps

- Plastic bags and wraps aren't typically recycled in curbside programs, but they are widely recycled through conveniently located collection bins at grocery and retail stores.
- Check your local grocer or retailer (e.g., Target, Lowe's) to see if they collect plastic bags and/or wraps. Most stores provide a bin at the entrance or sometimes at the checkout area.
- If your program collects bags only, you can recycle any clean, dry plastic carryout bag.
- If your store collects a wider variety of "plastic film" or "plastic bags and wraps" – as most of them do – you can recycle any of the following: plastic carryout bags and sacks; dry cleaning bags; newspaper bags; bread bags; cereal box liners (the plastic bags that come inside the cardboard box); produce bags; sealable food storage bags (no food residue); shipping envelopes (remove paper labels and stickers); wraps from paper products, (diapers, napkins, paper towels, bathroom tissue, and baby wipes); and case wrap from bulk snacks and beverages.
- Make sure plastic bags and wraps are clean and dry. NO food residue, paint, adhesive or stickers.
- To conveniently stow used plastic bags and wraps until your next trip to the store, simply place items inside a plastic bag and tie handles to keep everything neatly contained.
- When recycled, plastic bags and wraps can be made into new bags and wraps, durable outdoor decks and fences, homebuilding products, and lots of other things.

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