

CTC Environmental Department Plastic Bag Collection

We, here at the Chevak T.C. Environmental Department, collect plastic bags for a crocheting program for the students or community. We would like to start this program as soon as we have enough or more than enough plastic bags to start with. When you bring a bag of shopping bags for recycle, you will be eligible for the monthly drawing for recyclers.



A bag of shopping bags collected and brought to our Environmental Department

Ban the use of plastic shopping bags???

Some communities, here in Alaska, have successfully banned the use of plastic shopping bags. With your help and support we could make this happen. We would like to do the same. And if you don't like this thought, then start collecting your shopping bags and

bring them to us here at the CTC Environmental Department. Hope that you and your family will see this issue and agree to start using reusable bags in place of plastic shopping bags.



Reduce Reuse Recycle

Bring your plastic shopping bags to the Environmental Department here at Chevak Traditional Council

Environmental Department
P.O. BOX 140
Aurora Street
Chevak, Alaska 99563

Phone: 907-858-7827
Fax: 907-858-7812
Email: ctcenvironmental@hotmail.com



Plastic Shopping bags



Bring your plastic shopping bags to the Environmental Department here at Chevak Traditional Council

Should you use paper or plastic shopping bags??

You can find out, just read on...



Shopping Bags: **Paper or Plastic??????**

Did you know plastic grocery bags consume 40% less energy to produce 80% less solid waste than paper bags? Did you know plastic bags can take 5-10 years to decompose whereas paper bags take about a month to decompose? The debate



over whether plastic or paper bags are better for the environmental has a long history and is often rekindled each time we check out at the grocery store when we hear that familiar question: Paper or plastic? Many of us have not been able to resolve this question, but there is an alternative—read on below. There seem to be pluses and minuses on both sides of the debate. For paper bags the life cycle stages consist of timber harvesting, pulping, paper and bag making, product use and waste disposal. For plastic (polyethylene) bags, the steps involve petroleum or natural gas extraction, ethylene manufacture, ethylene polymerization, bag processing, product use and waste disposal. In all of these steps, energy is required and waste are generated.

Some more facts about these two products may help us to answer this question:

- Plastic bags were first introduced in 1977 and now account for four out of every five bags handed out at grocery stores.
- Paper sacks generate 70% more air and 50

time more water pollutants than plastic bags

- Paper bags are made from trees, which is a renewable resource. Most plastic bags are made from polyethylene, which is made from crude oil and natural gas, nonrenewable resources.
- 2000 plastic bags weigh 30 pounds, 2000 paper bags weigh 280 pounds. The latter takes up a lot more landfill (dump) space.
- It takes 91% less energy to recycle a pound of plastic than it takes to recycle a pound of paper. It takes more than four times as much energy to manufacture a paper bag as it does to manufacture a plastic bag.
- Paper is accepted in most recycling programs while the recycling rate for plastic bags is very low. Research from 2000 shows 20% of paper bags were recycled, while one percent of plastic bags were recycled.
- Current research demonstrates that paper in today's landfills does not degrade or break down at a substantially faster rate than plastic does. In fact, nothing completely degrades in modern landfills due to the lack of water, light, oxygen, and other important elements that are necessary for the degradation process to be completed.
- Incineration (burning) can decrease the quantity of plastic and paper bags. However, incineration causes air pollution and creates ashes which has to be land filled.

So, What is the Answer???

Paper or Plastic??? **NEITHER** is the answer. **Look into purchasing reusable bags or reusing your paper or plastic shopping bags at the store.** Reusing a bag meant for just one use has a big impact. A sturdy, reusable

bag needs only be used 11 times to have a lower environmental impact than using 11 disposable plastic bags.

- In New York City alone, one less grocery bag per person per year would reduce waste by five million pounds and save \$250,000 in disposal costs.
- When one ton of paper bags is reused or recycled, three cubic meters of landfill space is saved and 13-17 trees are spared! In 1997, 955,000 tons of paper bags were used in the United States.
- When one ton of plastic bags is reused or recycled, the energy equivalent of 11 barrels of oil are saved.

Many grocery stores now offer for sale sturdy cloth grocery bags. Some of these stores even give you a little discount if you bring your own bags(this is down states).

So, keep a stash of reusable bags and bring them with you to the store. When you are finished using them or may not use them please bring them to Chevak T.C.'s Environmental Department.

This information was obtained from the United States Environmental Protection Agency Website <http://www.epa.gov/cgi-bin/epaprintonly.cgi>

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