

WHAT IF WE... BANNED THE BAGS?

THE TROUBLESOME BAG

People of Illinois, we have a problem. A bag-shaped, semi-translucent, distributed-at-your-local-Jewel-and-Wal-Mart problem: lo and behold, the plastic bag. They're endlessly convenient, cost-efficient to make, and as it turns out, pretty terrible for the environment, and it [hasn't gone unnoticed](#). Obviously, we've all got questions: how bad are plastic bags, really? What's the state of the Earth? What will the state of the Earth be in twenty years? What can be done about it? What can I do?



Pictured: the fate of non-degradable plastics.

PLAN OF ACTION

We are a group of Illinois college students who wanted to fight for the health of our environment. We vowed to eliminate plastic bags from our lives for 1 month, and realized it's way easier than it seems. Explore our site to see how you can make a difference too.

One Month, One, Class, No Bags



WHO WE ARE



Plastics are everywhere in our daily lives, contributing to a serious pollution problem and harming the environment. They pose as a problem that will not go away for literally thousands of years, long after ourselves are gone. As citizens not only of Illinois but also of Planet Earth, we realized that something must be done to protect and save our home. Together, we have decided that our

WHY WE ARE HERE

According to professor and author [Jeffery L. Meikle](#), plastic was invented as a substitute for natural materials such as ivory and tortoise shell. The first form of plastic was called celluloid, derived from plant fibers. Over time, natural oil became the main ingredient in modern plastics. Polyurethane plastic, the kind most commonly found in plastic bags, does not decompose well, creating a pollution problem that could last thousands of years.

WHERE WE ARE NOW

Plastics are in every item we purchase, from [combs](#) and clothes to small parts of larger objects, like radio knobs in our cars. Plastics are everywhere, including natural habitats they doesn't belong in. Society is finally beginning to realize the destructive nature of plastic and our wasteful consumerist ways. Measures are being taken on both a large and individual scale to make a better future that is not suffocated with plastic.

WHAT WE'VE DONE

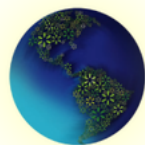
As a team, we pledged to go plastic bag free for one month. Here's how it went.

One Month, One, Class, No Bags



OUR GOAL

Our mission is to eliminate the distribution and use of harmful plastic bags in Illinois. Together, we can encourage the Illinois General Assembly to pass our very own, state-wide plastic bag ban. With countless cities, counties, and states across the nation having successfully implemented their own, it's the next step in making Illinois greener.



Earth Day
Every Day

DID YOU KNOW?

The average American takes home 1,500 plastic shopping bags a year, but only about 1% is recycled. This means the rest ends up in landfills or as litter.



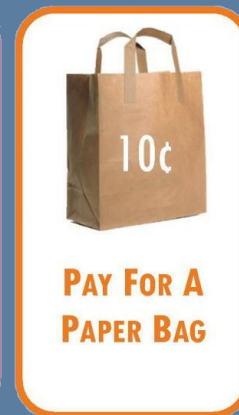
IT'S POSSIBLE



A number of grocery stores have already launched their own missions to reduce plastic, including Trader Joes and Whole Foods. Trader Joe's provides biodegradable & compostable produce bags, Whole Foods offers 10 cents back for using a reusable bag, and neither store supplies single-use plastic bags.

THE PEOPLE AGREE

93% of people say they would use reusable bags if there was a tax on plastic bags. A ban is the next step to get Illinois to 100%.



We conducted a survey to find out just how many Illinois residents support our mission. After collecting data from over 600 participants, we found that 96% of individuals agree that plastic bags are harming our environment. Many people of Illinois want action to be taken. We are not alone.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To learn more, please visit the other articles presented on this website. Thank you!

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WHY IT'S POSSIBLE!

MANY CITIES, COUNTIES, AND DISTRICTS HAVE JOINED IN THE GROWING MOVEMENT TO HELP SAVE OUR ENVIRONMENT. LIKE THE FOLLOWING STATES WE HOPE ILLINOIS WILL BE ON THE LIST ONE DAY!

NEW YORK **STATEWIDE**

Beginning March 2020, New York prohibits the distribution of single-use plastic bags in grocery stores and other retail stores, making it the second state-wide ban in the USA. The law also allows individual counties to place a fee on paper bags, as well.



HAWAII

COUNTIES OF **HAWAII**

Plastic bags are banned in Hawaii. The ban is on non-biodegradable plastic bags (as well as paper bags that contain less than 40% of recycled material).

Even with Hawaii being a tourist state, it has achieved a ban on plastic bags, something Illinois is still working on,



CALIFORNIA

STATE-WIDE

California enacted a state-wide single-use plastic ban in 2016. Voters approved Proposition 67 with 52% voting yes.

Even if the ban was barely a win, considering California's size, it is still a major achievement.

SEATTLE

STATEWIDE

After an initial failure in 2009, Seattle succeeded in banning plastic bags in 2012.

A true example of what we should strive for!

ILLINOIS HOPEFULLY

Illinois isn't on the list as of yet, but we hope with your help it won't stay that way.

If you are willing, [join the movement](#).

STATES WITH ENACTED PLASTIC BAG LEGISLATION

CITIES WITH PLASTIC BAG BANS

BOSTON

LOS ANGELES

SAN FRANCISCO

SEATTLE

- WITH MORE JOINING EVERYDAY

CITIES WITH PLASTIC BAG FEES

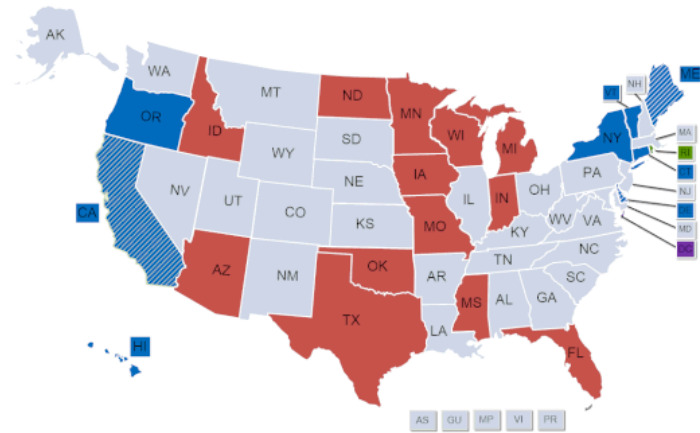
BOLDER, COLORADO

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MD

WASHINGTON, D.C

- WITH MORE JOINING EVERYDAY



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WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Make Your Voice Heard

One phone call to your congressperson makes a world of difference. All you have to do is follow the 3 easy steps below, and you will be speaking with your congressperson's office in minutes. From there, read the short script we have provided and join us on our mission to Ban the Bags!

How to Contact Your Congressperson

1. First, you'll need your zip code, and the 4 delivery route code that follows it. You can find these by going [HERE](#) and punching in your address.
2. Next, go [HERE](#) and follow the instructions to find your congressperson and their contact info.
3. After that, all you have to do is call up their office and follow the script!

Your Script

Hello, my name is [your name] and I'm a resident in [your congressperson's name]'s district. I'm calling today to encourage [your congressperson] to support and take action towards a ban on plastic grocery bags due to their negative environmental impact. There are a number of other responsible and sustainable options that we can, and should, use instead. Please pass my message on to [your congressperson], and thank you for your time!

When we call our congressperson's office, they are required to answer the call and make a log of it. So, rather than sending an email or signing a petition, making a phone call will have a greater influence. Together, if we can flood the phone lines of our congresspersons' offices, we will make an impact that can't be ignored.

IF MAKING A CALL TO YOUR CONGRESSPERSON'S OFFICE IS NOT POSSIBLE,
HERE ARE SOME SIMPLE ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE INSTEAD:



USE REUSABLE BAGS

Not just at grocery stores, but at shopping malls too!



USE REUSABLE WATER BOTTLES

Support our Earth's health while you support your own!



SAY "NO" WHEN POSSIBLE

If you don't need the bag or the straw, then don't take them!

Your choices matter. Your impact is lasting.

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WILL A PLASTIC BAG BAN REALLY BENEFIT THE ENVIRONMENT?

Although some may think plastic bags aren't a big deal, their detrimental effect on the environment cannot be understated. They often end up harming marine ecosystems, and the fact that they don't naturally degrade means they end up staying in our environment for hundreds if not thousands of years. A ban can deter this from happening and greatly improve conditions in our environment.

DO PLASTIC BAG BANS HURT BUSINESSES AND THE ECONOMY?

By eliminating plastic bags, producers can lower prices, consumers will therefore buy more, and the reusable bag industry will see a boost. Contrary to popular belief, the removal of the plastic bag industry will only help other industries and the economy thrive and flourish.

ARE ALTERNATIVES TO PLASTIC BAGS REALLY ANY BETTER?

The short answer is yes. In many cases, tote bags, if used a single time, have a significantly worse environmental impact. However, these stats are often times misleading, as tote bags aren't meant to be used a single time. Rather than being compared to a single bag, reusable bags should be compared to all the plastic bags that would have been used instead. Keeping this in mind, tote bags are far greener than disposable ones.

WHY SHOULD THE STATE DETERMINE WHETHER OR NOT I CAN USE PLASTIC BAGS? SHOULDN'T I BE ALLOWED TO DECIDE FOR MYSELF?

Nobody likes to be told what to do, but we shouldn't let our pride stand in the way of positive change. Regardless of how you feel about the effects of plastic bags, the possibility of decreasing our waste through reusable bags appeals to everyone. Passing a law to ban plastic bags would only be a way to move towards that goal. It would remove something that has no real benefit to us, and guarantee us the numerous payoffs of reusable bags.

FOR MORE INFORMATION