

Opposition to plastic grocery bags grows

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Opposition to the use of plastic grocery bags is increasing across the United State and most particularly in California, the Sacramento Bee reports.

The problem is the bags are filling landfills, clogging storm drains, harming marine life and littering roadsides, with nearly 90 billion used each year by 300 million U.S. citizens.

Some cities are alarmed. San Francisco officials are expected to resume discussions on a proposed 17-cent-a-bag fee to discourage their use and a similar plan may be proposed in Los Angeles, the Bee reported Thursday.

The problem started when plastic grocery bags were introduced during the early 1980s -- spawning the now familiar checkout question, "Paper or plastic?"

Today, plastic grocery bag manufacturing in the United States is a \$1 billion-a-year industry, with the bags' price hard to beat; plastic grocery bags cost about a penny each to manufacture, compared with 5 1/2 cents for a paper bag.

But opposition is spreading, with the bags already banned in some countries while others are imposing fees. Three years ago, after Ireland set a 15-cent-per-bag fee, the use of plastic grocery bags fell by 90 percent.

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