

Plastic Bag Industry Invests \$50m in Recycled Content Bags

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The American Chemistry Council (ACC) is aiming for plastic bags to be manufactured with 40 percent recycled content by 2015, which is expected to reduce waste by 300 million pounds per year.

Meeting the goal will require two primary objectives be met:

1. The manufacturing process will need to be overhauled, so the plastic bag industry is looking to invest \$50 million for this purpose
2. The industry will need to collect more plastic bags to provide the additional recycled content, although no specific numbers have been mentioned

The ACC says plastic bag recycling has increased by 27 percent from 2005 to 2007, when 830 million pounds were collected. This was also before large cities and states developed bag recycling programs in retail stores.

When plastic bags are collected for recycling, they are shredded into pellets that can be used for new bags as well as plastic lumber. Recycled content plastic bags usually look more green or gray than those without plastic content.

One potential obstacle for plastic collection is the rise in popularity of reusable bags, which allow customers to shop without using plastic bags at all. Whole Foods estimates that reusable bag use has tripled in the last year alone.

The new campaign has already received support from several retailers, including Walgreens and Publix, as well as regional groups like the Arizona Retailers Association, the California Retailers Association, the Illinois Retail Merchants Association, the Ohio Grocers Association and the Texas Retailers Association.
