



Ban the Bag: Back off Single- Use Plastics.

by B. Patrick Conaway
Big Heart Little Feet

Sources: Center for Biological Diversity,
<<http://www.biologicaldiversity.org>
Massachusetts Sierra Club,
<<http://www.sierraclubmass.org>>

The Problem: Items of convenience threaten our earth and oceans.

- ~ 500 billion plastic bags are used per year worldwide
- Americans use about 100 billion plastic bags per year
- Massachusetts uses an estimated 2 billion plastic bags per year



Where do they go?

- *Few:* recycled (less than 10%)
Some recycled overseas
- *Many:* end up in landfills, or incinerators
- *Most:* loose as plastic pollution, eventually making their way into our rivers and streams and ultimately the oceans

“Convenient” and “Cheap”

- *However*, the environmental cost far exceeds the cost retailers pay to provide them

*It costs 2¢ to make one,
and 17¢ to clean one up.*



The Oceans Need Your Help

- Single use plastic check-out bags threaten the oceans and our earth
- Debris in our ocean swirling in giant spiral (gyres)
 - Plastic beverage containers
 - Styrofoam
 - Plastic Bags

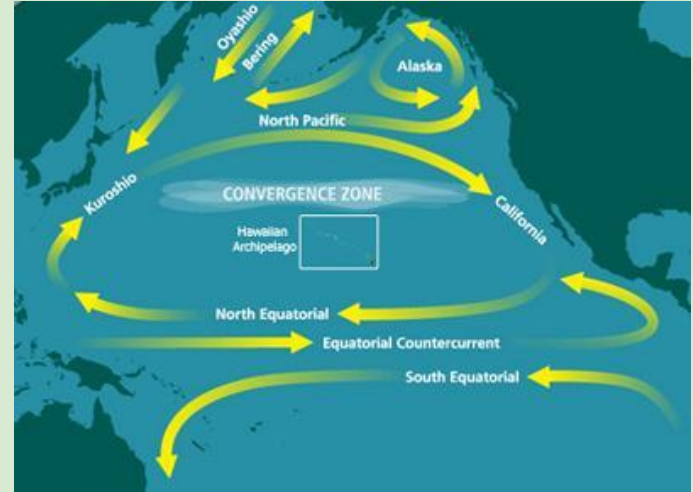
5 Gyres

- *Billions of pounds of plastic*: found in swirling convergences making up about 40 percent of the world's ocean surfaces.
- *80 percent of pollution* enters the ocean from the land.



The Great Pacific Garbage Patch:

- In the *North Pacific Gyre* off the coast of California
- Largest ocean garbage site in the world
- This floating mass of plastic *is twice the size of Texas*, with plastic pieces outnumbering sea life six to one.



- Only a small percentage of ocean plastics float at the sea surface
- *Most plastics are dispersed throughout the water column, resting on the seafloor, trapped in Arctic ice, or inside ocean animals. --*

The Ocean Conservancy

Plastic Ocean



They blow. They cling. They float

- Plastic bags take a LONG time to break down
 - Do not dissolve into benign substances
- Instead, fracture into smaller and smaller bits called “microplastics”



Here in Natick:

- *The bags are everywhere*
- *Our bags are carried by wind and waterways to the ocean*



(West Natick Train Station)



***Chase Ice Arena -
DPW Driveway***

***Dug Pond - looking southwest
from Campus Drive***



California Bans the Bag

The State of California estimates that approximately 19 billion plastics bags are used annually; cities, counties and other agencies were spending \$25 million per year to collect and transport them to landfills.

- ***California passed a statewide ban in September 2014***

Brookline Bans the Bag

- **Passed two years ago at Town Meeting.**
- **First Year:** devoted to adjustment and education
- **Second Year:** opportunity for waivers
- **Implemented** January 2013
- Applies to stores > 2500 sq. ft.
or gross sales > than \$1 million

Newton Bans the Bag

- **Newton Board of Aldermen** adopted an Ordinance to **Ban single-use plastic carry-out bags** in January 2015
- **To be administered** by their Board of Health and Human Services
- **To be implemented** July 2015
- Applies to stores > 3500 sq. ft. or a total of two or more stores in Newton with > 3500 sq. ft.
- **Waivers** (up to 6 months) **may be obtained** by applying to the Commissioner of Health and Human Services

Cambridge Bans the Bag

- Dubbed the “**Bring Your Own Bag**” bill — or BYOB
- **The goal:** turn Cambridge into the first municipality in the state requiring retailers to charge for paper bags (10¢)
- **And:** stress the importance of reusable canvas or fabric bags
- A city councilor has proposed that the City purchase 10,000 reusable shopping bags to help consumers and retailers w/ the transition

Results and feedback:

- The Brookline Board of Health manages monitoring and compliance. Thus far no problems.
- No merchants or stores have gone out of business as a result.
- Starbucks, Dunkin Donuts, Walgreens, Stop and Shop all complying without complaint.

Other Massachusetts Communities that have Banned the Bag



Falmouth
Great Barrington
Manchester-by-the-Sea
Marblehead
Nantucket
Newburyport
Provincetown

The Proposed Natick By-Law

If passed at 2015 Spring Town Meeting:

- Would incorporate the basics of the Brookline Ban the Bag By-Law

We hope to work with local merchants and businesses to build support and ease the transition by introducing incentives to join the

***Natick Goes
Green Project***



at the Mill St. Bridge (W. Natick)

Natick Goes Green

Join us in our campaign to encourage local businesses to adopt earth-friendly behaviors.

Participating businesses will receive recognition on the *Natick Goes Green* Facebook page that will encourage locals to visit the business and support their efforts



Our first recruit:
LoLA's Italian Groceria

Our mission:

To encourage local businesses to join us in a movement to back off single-use plastic and adopt more sustainable practices while growing their business among many customers who would prefer to buy products from stores that embrace ***green principles and practices.***

Like us on Facebook ***“Natick Goes Green”*** For more information contact:

Pat Conaway: bpconaway@gmail.com or

Abby Fournier: abbykfournier@gmail.com

Level 1 (light green) – Earth's Friend

- Establish in-store recycling for bottles, cans, and paper, “buddied up” with a trash container



Level 2 (green) – Earth's Advocate

- In store recycling with the option of outdoor recycling (depending on layout)
- Offer compostable earth-friendly products (containers, plates, utensils)
- Offer paper bags made of 100% post consumer fibers and/or reusable plastic bags made of recycled content

Natick Goes Green!

This is the 2nd of 3 levels to becoming **GREEN**

Baldwin Hill Art & Framing is the
EARTH'S ADVOCATE



Green practices:
Recycles leftover materials
AND
Uses earth-friendly products for frames
Collects scraps for teachers to use for art projects

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Palettes is the
EARTH'S ADVOCATE



Green practices:
In store recycling for paper/bottles/cans
AND
Corn starch-based and paper cups
Instructor canvases are reused
Cardboard palettes are recycled after use

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Five Crows is the
EARTH'S ADVOCATE



Green practices:
Recycling for paper/bottles/cans
AND
Offer paper bags as an alternative to plastic bags
Sells art made from recycled materials

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Lola's Italian Groceria is the
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Green practices:
Recycling for paper/bottles/cans
AND
Compostable earth-friendly products
Paper bags of 100% post consumer fibers/
Reusable bags of recycled content

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Level 3 (dark green) – Earth's Guardian

- Avoid all polystyrene and foam products (cups, take out containers, utensils, straws, etc.)
- Offer inexpensive washable/reusable products (if applicable)
- **Do not provide single-use plastic carry-out bags**

