



## REFUSE, RETHINK, REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE

### Why Recycle Plastic Bags?

- Plastic bags are among the most common sources of marine debris, where they can be mistaken as food by birds and fish.
- Plastic bags don't biodegrade, meaning it will take hundreds of years for them to decompose in a landfill. ([www.earth911](http://www.earth911))
- More than 4.83 million tons of plastic film has been generated to date and only about 9.1% of that plastic is recycled. ([www.ecologycenter.org](http://www.ecologycenter.org))
- Today, we use about **100 billion** plastic bags each year in the U.S., with the average lifespan of just 12 minutes per bag.

No matter where you stand on plastic bags, there are some things we should all agree on:

1. **Plastic bags do NOT belong in the household recycling stream.** Plastic bags and plastic wrap (collectively known as "plastic film" in the recycling industry short-hand) are the number one problem at recycling facilities because they wrap around sorting machinery, shutting down the sorting line often multiple times per day.
2. **Reducing and reusing is best.** At the grocery store, pharmacy, or anywhere you're shopping, using reusable grocery bags and produce bags (or even opting for no bag if you are only picking up a few items you can easily carry), is always the best way to go. You can also reuse plastic bags to clean up after your pets or to line small trash cans.
3. **Plastic bags and wrap SHOULD be recycled ... at drop-off collection bins in most supermarkets.** Even if you've sworn off plastic grocery bags there's still a lot of plastic film in your fridge, pantry and utility closet. And while it's not as convenient as recycling at the curb, we think it's worth the extra effort to collect and recycle plastic film at your local collection site. (Sources from [www.recyclesmartma.org](http://www.recyclesmartma.org)).

***Recycle your Plastic Bags at Shaws or Stop and Shop Grocery Stores in Orleans, MA.***