

Arizona City Joins Plastic Bag Recycling Program

By

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The city of Tucson, Ariz., set in motion plans to require plastic bag recycling at supermarkets and other retail outlets and to educate its citizens about the importance of recycling.

The Tucson City Council is expected to vote on the program this coming January. If the program is approved, it will take effect in July.

Under the Tucson recycling program:

- Grocers and retailers will place plastic grocery bag recycling bins with signs in front of stores;
- Tucson will create a campaign to encourage recycling of plastic bags;
- Plastic bags will have printed recycling logos and information; and
- The city will measure how much plastic is being recycled under the program.

In addition to plastic grocery bags, shoppers can return other types of plastic film, such as bags for dry-cleaning, newspapers and produce along with product wraps from paper towels, bathroom tissue, napkins, and diapers. Retailers also will carry reusable bags that shoppers can purchase.

"Plastic is too valuable to waste – it should be recycled," said Shari Jackson of the Progressive Bag Affiliates, part of the American Chemistry Council. "Today's plastic bags can be tomorrow's durable decking, fencing, railings, shopping carts or new bags, so we can all do our part to help the environment and the economy by keeping these innovative products out of the trash.

Although the recycling of plastic bags and wraps grew 24 percent in 2006, there still are opportunities to do even better, Jackson said. She encourages shoppers across America to look for the recycling bin in front of grocery stores or near the checkout counters and bring back clean plastic grocery bags and product wraps to be recycled.