

PAPER BAG BANS, FEES AND TAXES

International Paper is a leading manufacturer of Kraft paper bags with bag manufacturing facilities in California, Oregon, and Texas.



ADVANTAGES OF PAPER BAGS

The paper bag is an environmental and economic success story. Paper bags are:



Reusable, Recyclable, Compostable

- Based on EPA data, more paper by weight is recovered for recycling from municipal solid waste streams than plastic, glass and aluminum combined
- Paper bags naturally decompose and are compostable



Made From Renewable Resources

- According to the U.S. Forest Service, more than 3.2 million trees are planted every day
- More than 1/3 of the U.S. is forested, with more trees today than 50 years ago



Produced Using Green Biomass Energy

- 75% of the energy used to make our products is generated using biomass residuals instead of fossil fuels



Best Choice For Retailers And Consumers

- Convenient to store, easy to ship and practical to use
- Strong, versatile, reliable

ISSUE

Since 2007, when San Francisco became the first city to enact a ban on single use plastic bags, more than 360 localities and eight states have imposed some type of ban, fee or other restriction on retail bags. In 2019 alone, 264 bag bills were introduced at the state level. While these policies have been directed primarily at plastic bags due to concerns with litter and marine waste, there has been a significant increase in the number of proposals that would impact paper bags as well. Most legislative proposals include a ban on plastic bags and a fee on paper. Recycled content mandates are another policy element, and for the first time an outright ban on paper bags was introduced in New Jersey. This policy emphasis on paper bags is not driven by sound science or concerns for consumers, but rather by retail merchants looking to benefit financially from the increasing focus on the impact of plastic bags on the environment. This is especially problematic given these issues are a direct result of retailers switching to lightweight plastic bags over the past 30 years.

POLICY REQUEST

- Oppose any bans, taxes, or fees that would limit paper bag use and unfairly tax citizens, especially those living in low income communities
- Oppose recycled content mandates that distort the free flow of recovered fiber and disrupt an already successful market-based paper recycling system
- Support policies that improve recycling infrastructure, resulting in the collection of additional clean material that can be reused by manufacturers