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Recycling Council of British Columbia Single-Use Bags Policy

It is the Recycling Council of B.C.'s position that the issue of single-use shopping bags should be addressed through the B.C. Recycling Regulation, which would hold producers responsible for managing these products throughout their entire life cycle.

The objective of this program should be to shift away from single-use shopping bags and encourage reusable options whenever possible, with the remaining quantity of single-use bags collected and recycled through an Extended Producer Responsibility program.

- An excessive quantity of single-use shopping bags are generated in the province of B.C.
- The extraction and production of the material to manufacture single-use bags acts as another major source of greenhouse gas emissions
- Responsibility has largely fallen upon municipalities and taxpayers to collect and dispose of single-use shopping bags
- Many local governments in B.C. are considering applying bans, taxes and other regulatory tools available to them to reduce the quantity of single-use bags generated within their jurisdictions
- These policies have the potential to drive positive change and encourage senior levels of government and the private sector to tackle the issue of single-use bags
- Many private sector stakeholders have voluntarily agreed to reduce the quantity of single-use bags that are distributed within their stores
- The combination of local government and private sector initiatives, while positive, creates a multi-jurisdictional patchwork of programs that are confusing to both producers and consumers
- Any solution needs to focus on all single-use bags and material types (plastic, paper, biodegradable etc.) and not favor any one material type over the others.

As passed by the Recycling Council of B.C. Board of Directors on December 5, 2008