

# Reducing Plastic Bags: Let's Tackle This Harmful Single-use Plastic



## The Problem with Plastic Bags

- The world uses 5 trillion plastic bags each year—consuming nearly 1 million gallons of petroleum in the process.
- The average American uses 365 plastic bags per year, compared to just 4 per person in Denmark.
- The U.S. produces nearly 1 million tons of plastic bags, sacks, and wraps annually. More than 87% are never recycled, ending up in landfills, waterways, oceans, and the environment.
- Chemicals in plastic bags and bottles are linked to serious health risks—including cancers, birth defects, hormone disruption, and immune system damage in both humans and wildlife.
- Plastic bags take hundreds of years to degrade, breaking down into microplastics that pollute our air, water, bodies, and ecosystems.
- Every year, millions of plastic bags are collected during global beach and waterway cleanups.

## Progress Is Possible

- In 2014, California became the first U.S. state to ban plastic bags. Today, 12 states have enacted statewide bans.
- 127 countries around the world have adopted some form of plastic bag regulation.
- In Wisconsin, we face a “ban on bans” law, so local communities can't prohibit plastic bags. That means it's up to us to make the change.

## Take Action!

- Bring Your Own bags, coffee cups, refillable water bottles, and utensils everywhere you go.
- Join us at upcoming community events to learn more and for t-shirt tote bag workshops and sewing bees with Bring Your Own Bag Shorewood!

Visit the Catch the Wave webpage for more details.



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