



CF# [handwritten scribble]

VIA EMAIL

To: Los Angeles City Council
Attn:
Councilmember Koretz
Councilmember Huizar

11-15
CITY CLERK
JUL 23 PM 2:48
RECEIVED
CITY CLERK'S OFFICE

Re: **Opposition** to 5/30/2012 [11-1531-S3] (Parks/Perry) Motion Re: Education of Health & Safety Impacts of Plastics Bags, referred to Energy & Environment Committee

On behalf of Seventh Generation Advisors, a Los-Angeles based environmental nonprofit working to make a sustainable world seven generations into the future, I write in strong opposition to the Bernard Parks 5/30/2012 [11-1531-S3] Motion Re: Education of Health & Safety Impacts of Plastics Bags ("Parks motion").

The Parks motion (to direct fees for public education about health impacts of reusable bags) is not a scientifically valid or justified use of retail funds, or City efforts. The motion should be overruled.

With over 30 California ban/fee ordinances adopted to date that cover 49 jurisdictions, with over 25% of the world's population using reusable bags, and with CA cities (e.g., Malibu, Berkeley) having used reusable bags for some time without incident, this motion does not warrant serious consideration. Councilmember Parks is simply accommodating plastic industry attempts to thwart a proposed bag ban ordinance.

The motion is unwarranted because there is little evidence that reusable bags make people sick. The Gerba study relied upon by the Parks motion (as the basis for necessary health and safety education) simply points out that hygiene is a critical element for public health protection. The study certainly didn't advocate for continued reliance on single-use plastic bags to protect public health. We've yet to see a Samonella, E. coli 0157 or cholera outbreak in a country that has banned or put a fee on plastic bags.

The study simply points out what we all know: wash your bags periodically and don't put raw chicken and meat with the rest of your groceries.

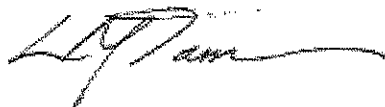
The Parks motion is following in the footsteps of bogus studies by the American Chemistry Council (ACC). The ACC previously funded a study looking at bacterial contamination of bags, in an attempt to discourage bag bans. The study found that 12 percent of its 84-bag sample size had *E.coli*, and all samples but one contained bacteria. This finding briefly generated inappropriately scary press about the dangers of reusable bags. But none of the bacteria or strains of *E.Coli* found in reusable bags are harmful to healthy humans (for example, listeria and salmonella were not present). A July 22, 2010

Consumer Reports article subsequently debunked this ACC study, with a senior scientist saying "A person eating an average bag of salad greens gets more exposure to these bacteria than if they had licked the insides of the dirtiest bag from this study." (July 22, 2010 Consumer Reports Safety & Recalls). The Parks motion and its reliance on the Gerba study is simply a resurrection of these type of subversive attempts to manipulate science to discredit bag bans.

The fact that the Parks motion contains a 'poison pill' provision—redirecting the funds to non-profits—is the best evidence of the insincere impetus for the motion. Money for nonprofits for public health education sounds nice, but to direct funds in this manner will open Los Angeles City to Prop 26 lawsuits (Prop 26 does not allow the City to tell stores what to do with the 10 cent fee). Councilmember Parks and the plastic industry know better than to draft legislation in this manner; that they suggest this only highlights their disingenuous motives to derail ban efforts.

In conclusion, we strongly oppose the Parks motion, and request City Council members overrule it in its entirety.


Sincerely,



Leslie Mintz Tamminen
Ocean Program Director
Seventh Generation Advisors
www.seventhgenerationadvisors.org
(310) 780-3344

cc: Los Angeles City Council

- My Plastic-free Life | Less Plastic | Life without Plastic - <http://myplasticfreelife.com> -

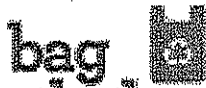
CF # 11-1531


Don't Be Fooled by Reusable Bag Norovirus Scare

Posted By Beth Terry On May 11, 2012 @ 4:36 pm In Plastic Bags | 30 Comments



[1]It's been all over the news for the past two days: Six Oregon girls, travelling to an out of town soccer tournament in Seattle, all got sick with norovirus after passing around cookies in a reusable bag. Scientists from the Oregon Public Health department did some sleuthing and traced the virus to the reusable bag. (Read the full story on OregonLive.com [2].) So, does that mean that reusable bags are dangerous? The disposable bag industry would like you to think so. Hilex Poly, the plastic bag manufacturer that mislead consumers about plastic bag recycling rates [3] in December, sent out this gem to its subscribers yesterday:



bag the ban. Say no to bans and taxes on your grocery bags.

Norovirus in reusable bags -- and LA still wants bag ban


It's official: Oregon scientists have concluded that an outbreak of the dangerous norovirus was traced back to a reusable bag. Members of a girls' soccer team -- 13- and 14-year-olds -- became mysteriously sick at a tournament back in 2010. And scientists now know why: people were eating cookies from a reusable bag contaminated with the same virus that annually causes nearly 21 million illnesses nationwide.

And even in the face of all this, Los Angeles is still considering banning plastic and paper bags -- forcing Californians to carry their groceries in the very same kind of bags that got the girls sick.

Send a letter to Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa today. Tell him that a bag ban is the wrong choice for LA.

Plastic bags aren't just the sanitary alternative, they're the environmentally friendly alternative too. They're 100% recyclable (many reusable bags aren't); they're also used every day in dozens of ways. Plastic bags can be used for trash can liners, for pet waste, for storage around the home -- and then recycled into items like park benches and playground equipment.

Contact Mayor Villaraigosa today. Tell him that there's a clean, recyclable alternative to germy reusable bags -- but there won't be for long if he doesn't stop the bag ban.

 Bag the Ban is brought to you by the people of Hilex Poly, a global leader in plastic bag recycling and manufacturing.

©2012, Hilex Poly
Unsubscribe

[4]

Hilex Poly uses bogus scare tactics to discredit reusable bags

Hilex Poly wants you to believe that reusable bags are dangerous because they can carry viruses. But let's look at the actual facts of the case before jumping to that conclusion.

1) The first girl who came down with norovirus had not touched the reusable bag when she

RECEIVED
CITY CLERK'S OFFICE
2012 JUN 15 PM 2:33
CITY CLERK
BY DEPUTY

RECEIVED
CITY CLERK'S OFFICE
2012 JUL 23 PM 2:48
CITY CLERK
BY DEPUTY

got sick. In fact, no one knows how she contracted the virus. But after getting sick, she spent 6 hours in her chaperon's bathroom having diarrhea and throwing up. Her chaperon then drove her back home to Oregon.

2) The reusable bag happened to be in the chaperone's bathroom while the girl was in there being sick.

3) On Monday, another girl saw the bag in the bathroom and brought it to lunch filled with store-bought cookies that had never been opened.

4) The girls passed the bag around, and all of them got sick.

To me, several things are clear from the facts of the case:

1) The reusable bag full of cookies was not contaminated until it spent 6 hours in a bathroom with a sick puking girl. I would imagine that most of the objects in that bathroom were contaminated at that point.

2) If a disposable plastic bag had been in that bathroom, it probably would have been contaminated too. Hilex Poly's conclusion that disposable plastic bags are safer than reusable bags is unfounded. As Stiv Wilson from [5 Gyres](#) [5] pointed out in an email, both kinds of bags are made of plastic. The reusable bag the girls passed around was made from polypropylene, so it's not like we're comparing plastic and some other natural material here.

My conclusion is that this story really has nothing to do with disposable vs. reusable bags. The study simply proves that norovirus can be passed via inanimate objects, and in this case, the object just happened to be a reusable bag, but it could have been a disposable bag, or a door knob, or a keyboard. To quote the article:

That confirmation marked a breakthrough: Scientists have long known that this hardy virus is transmitted from person to person but never before have they been able to prove that transmission from an inanimate object caused an outbreak.

'In other outbreaks, we have been able to isolate the virus from door handles or keyboards, but we have never been able to show it was the keyboard or door handle that made people sick,' said Kimberly Repp, epidemiologist with the [Washington County Department of Health and Human Services](#) [6].

What's more, asked whether she would advise against reusable bags,

Repp does not recommend that consumers ditch reusable grocery bags. But she says they should be cleaned with sanitizing wipes or in the washing machine after traveling to a store.

'You wash your clothes after you wear them,' she said. 'Wash your bag after you use it.'

And perhaps more to this particular point, as [Alice Park from TIME](#) concludes [7], keep your grocery bags and food out of your bathroom. Duh.

A Few More Reusable Bag Safety Tips

Whether your reusable bag is made from plastic, cotton, hemp, or any other material, you should wash it regularly. And that goes for reusing disposable plastic bags too. The plastic bag industry likes to insist that disposable plastic bags can be reused. If that's the case, then they should be washed too. The point is not that reusable bags are somehow more prone to breeding microbes but that all objects can pick up germs from being used over and over again.

Next thing you know, companies will be touting disposable underwear because cloth undies can carry germs.

It doesn't take much effort to wash reusable bags. Hand or machine washing can reduce the number of bacteria in reusable bags by >99.9%, according to a [2010 study](#) [8] of bacteria in reusable bags.

Keep meat and fish separate from produce and other foods. As many of you know, we buy meat for our cats in a big stainless steel pot. What you may not know is that we have designated one particular reusable bag to carry the pot. We don't ever use that bag for other kinds of groceries.

Tell Mayor Villaraigosa the truth!

Hilex Poly is urging its supporters to write to LA's Mayor Villaraigosa to oppose the proposed plastic bag ban. That means that WE need to explain why these scare tactics will not work and why reusable bags are not a public health threat. Environment California has a [form letter](#) [9] on its site that is easy to fill out. Whether you are an L.A. resident or not, please take a minute to use the form to explain the plastic bag industry's misleading tactics and urge the mayor to support the plastic bag ban.

Have a great weekend!

Article printed from My Plastic-free Life | Less Plastic | Life without Plastic:
<http://myplasticfreelife.com>

URL to article: <http://myplasticfreelife.com/2012/05/dont-be-fooled-by-reusable-bag-norovirus-scare/>

URLs in this post:

[1] Image: <http://myplasticfreelife.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/pp-reusable-bag.jpg>

[2] Read the full story on OregonLive.com:

http://www.oregonlive.com/health/index.ssf/2012/05/in_a_first_oregon_scientific_s.html

[3] mislead consumers about plastic bag recycling rates:

<http://myplasticfreelife.com/2011/12/plastic-bag-manufacturer-misleads-public-about-recycling-rates-heres-the-truth/>

[4] Image: <http://myplasticfreelife.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/Hilex-Poly-norovirus-reusable-bag-scare.gif>

[5] 5 Gyres: <http://5gyres.org>

[6] Washington County Department of Health and Human Services:

<http://www.co.washington.or.us/HHS/>


[7] Alice Park from TIME concludes: <http://healthland.time.com/2012/05/10/why-you-shouldnt-keep-your-grocery-bag-in-the-bathroom/>

[8] 2010 study:

http://www.uanews.org/pdfs/GerbaWilliamsSinclair_BagContamination.pdf

[9] form letter: <https://secure3.convio.net/engage/site/Advocacy?cmd=display&page=UserAction&id=5081>

Copyright © 2010 Fake Plastic Fish | Live Life With Less Plastic. (<http://fakeplasticfish.com>) All rights reserved.

RECEIVED
 CITY CLERK'S OFFICE
 2012 JUN 15 PM 2:34
 BY  CITY CLERK
 DEPUTY

Spoutingoff's BlogRECEIVED
CITY CLERK'S OFFICE

2012 JUN 15 PM 2:33

CITY CLERK
BY _____
DEPUTY
MS

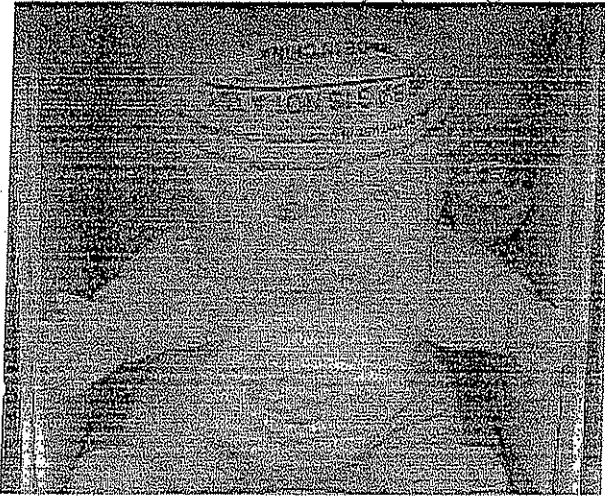
CF # 11-1531

Mark Gold's
response

(Heal the Bay)

Masters of the Obvious

Posted on June 24, 2010 by spoutingoff



(http://spoutingoff.files.wordpress.com/2010/06/toy-not-a-bag_cropped_800x632.jpg) Today, in a study bought and paid for by the American Chemistry Council (ACC), earth-shattering findings were released to the public. Unwashed reusable bags can be contaminated with a variety of bacterial pathogens, including Salmonella. Bag bacteria counts are especially high when you allow meat and chicken to incubate in the trunk of a car where temperatures can get nice and toasty. I wonder how much the ACC paid for this ground-breaking research to point out the obvious.

But give credit where credit is due, at least the ACC hired a professor with a strong scientific reputation, Chuck Gerba from the University of Arizona. Gerba has done a number of these studies and I seem to remember him comparing kitchen counter and sink sponge pathogen levels to toilet bowls. Guess which surfaces were more contaminated? Don't use that kitchen sponge for too long!! Gerba's research points out that hygiene is a critical element for public health protection, but it certainly didn't advocate for continued reliance on single-use plastic bags to protect public health. I've yet to see a Samonella, E. coli 0157 or cholera outbreak in a country that has banned or put a fee on plastic bags (although wait for the ACC to blame the next bird flu outbreak in China on their plastic bag ban!).

The study points out what we all know. Wash your bags periodically and don't put raw chicken and meat with the rest of your groceries. I've been using reusable bags for years, but I still put my produce and meat in separate plastic bags. The study's accompanying poll reminds us that many people just don't use common sense when it comes to protecting public health. That's why plastic bags often come accompanied with warnings such as, "This bag is not a toy!" In a liability driven world, those words of warning became necessary because one toddler too many was left to play with a plastic bag. However, no one supporting [AB 1998](#) (<http://www.healthebay.org/actionalerts/ab1998/default.asp>) is asking for a plastic bag ban because of suffocation risk.

Today, the LA Times joined the growing ranks of newspapers that have strongly endorsed AB 1998 (<http://www.latimes.com/news/opinion/editorials/la-ed-bags-20100624.0.7190647.story>), and the first senate committee (Environmental Quality) vote is scheduled for Monday, so the release of the ACC study could not have been more perfectly timed by AB 1998 opponents. But the fact the ACC paid for such a study tells you how desperate they are getting. Of course the bill authors and supporters (including the grocers, grocers' union, retailers and environmental community) took these concerns into account. That's why the bill doesn't apply to plastic bags used for produce and meats.

Final words of incredibly obvious advice: 1) Wash your bags with soap and hot water; 2) Don't put raw meat and chicken or even produce in your reusable bag; and 3) Don't eat, lick or otherwise taste your reusable bag. These words of wisdom are right up there with: 1) Wash your hands with potable water and soap after you go to the bathroom; 2) Cover your mouth when you cough and sneeze; 3) Stay home when you have a fever; and 4) Remember, wear clean underwear each and every day!

If everyone follows these words of wisdom, we will live in a much healthier world. And that advice is not brought to you by the ACC.

 ADD THIS  (<http://www.addthis.com/bookmark.php>)

5/17/12



CF #11-1531

Request for norovirus report

Bill Keene <keene@epilinks.com>

Sun, May 13, 2012 at 7:07 PM

I am attaching the published report. Keep in mind that a lot of the media reports got a bit off topic.

#1. This story has nothing to do with disposable bags, reusable bags, or anything similar. It is about how when norovirus-infected people vomit, they shower their surroundings with an invisible fog of viruses—viruses that can later infect people who have contact with those inanimate objects (fomites). In this case it was a reusable bag AND ITS CONTENTS—sealed packages of Oreos, Sun Chips, and grapes— but it could just have easily been a disposable plastic bag, a paper bag, a cardboard box, the flush handle on the toilet, the sink, the floor, or the nearby countertops. Anything within range of the aerosol fallout.

The people got sick because they ate the food that involved touching the packages that were in the bag. Probably some of them never even touched the bag, but they all touched and ate at least one of the chips, cookies, or grapes. No one else seems to have gotten the story straight so you can still be the first. (Our ex-intern is doing all the interviews, and pretty well, but she is letting the reporters drag her into this irrelevant tangent.)

Although it had nothing to do with THIS outbreak, regular washing of reusable shopping bags is a good idea in its own right. Obviously meat, poultry, and the like should be wrapped in plastic before they go into the checkout bag, but it is reasonable to assume that will become dirty with use.

The real message, if there is one, is 1) don't store food in bathrooms, or, if you must, take it out before people start vomiting or having diarrhea in the room. 2) If you ignore #1, toss any cookies or the like that have been stored there during such a potential invisible exposure. 3) For people with the luxury of multiple bathrooms, try to dedicate one to use by sick people whilst they are vomiting or having diarrhea, and 4) bathrooms used by sick persons should be not only cleaned but "sanitized" with appropriate care (5000 ppm bleach = ~ 10% solution of household chlorine bleach). If you can, wear gloves and a mask while you clean. That means wipe down all the surfaces that people might get their hands on—the toilet seat, the handles, the countertops, the doorknob—all of it.

William E Keene, PhD MPH
Senior Epidemiologist
Acute & Communicable Disease Prevention
Oregon Public Health Division
800 NE Oregon St, Ste. 772
Portland OR 97232-2162

keene@epilinks.com (preferred)
william.e.keene@state.or.us

971.673.1111 phone
971.673.1100 fax
503.572.6504 mobile

RECEIVED
CITY CLERK'S OFFICE
2012 JUN 15 PM 2:33
CITY CLERK
BPD
PROPERTY

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Keene William E" <william.e.keene@state.or.us>

Expert • Independent • Nonprofit

ConsumerReports.org

RECEIVED
CITY CLERK'S OFFICE

CF#11-1531-



2012 JUN 15 PM 2:33

en

Home > News > Safety & Recalls

Top Product Ratings: TVs | Digital Cameras | Washing Machines | Vacuum Cleaners | GPS | SUVs | Car Seats | Strollers

Filter: SUBSCRIBER CONTENT

Consumer News

Subscribe to
Consumer News Feed

BY CITY CLERK

Filter News By Topic

SAFETY & RECALLS

Can reusable grocery bags make you sick, or is that just baloney?

Jul 22, 2010 1:24 PM

An old saw in the news business is "consider the source" -- in other words, take into account not just what you're hearing, but where it comes from. Which is why we're not so swayed by a recent report about reusable grocery bags and their potential to make you sick.

The report came out of the University of Arizona, Tucson and Loma Linda University in California. Smack on page one is this note: "The authors would like to acknowledge and thank the American Chemistry Council for providing funding to support this study."

The American Chemistry Council is the trade group that advocates on behalf of plastic-bag manufacturers. Now why would the folks who make plastic grocery bags want to cast doubts on the safety of reusable grocery bags? Oh, right.

And it worked, sort of. The way it played in the media was that reusable grocery bags may be good for the environment, but you're taking your health in your hands every time you, you know, reuse one, because the bags can harbor e coli and other bacteria.

That soundbite was based on the report's analysis of 84 reusable grocery bags collected in California and Arizona. Yup, just 84. We have a colleague who grew up with 10 sisters and brothers. A single weekly shopping trip for his family could easily net 20 bags of groceries, so 84 doesn't really seem like an adequate sample size for a scientific study.

The researchers tested for pathogenic bacteria *Salmonella* and *Listeria*, but didn't find any, nor did they find strains of *E. coli* that could make one sick. They only found bacteria that don't normally cause disease, but do cause disease in people with weakened immune systems.

Our food-safety experts were underwhelmed as well. "A person eating an average bag of salad greens gets more exposure to these bacteria than if they had licked the insides of the dirtiest bag from this study," says Michael Hansen, senior staff scientist at Consumers Union. "These bacteria can be found lots of places, so no need to go overboard."

But Hansen notes that there are some reminders to take away from the study. It's easy to spread bacteria from meat, fish, or poultry to other foods -- in your kitchen or in your grocery bags. So we do think it's wise to carry those items in disposable bags. Reusable bags are fine for most everything else, but it's a good idea to wash them occasionally.



SUBSCRIBE ONLINE
Join today & get
24/7 online access to:

- ▶ Expert Ratings
- ▶ Buying advice
- ▶ Much, much more!


SUBSCRIBE

Featured Stories


Recovery in sight for housing market, new Harvard study finds

Expert Ratings

Previous Next

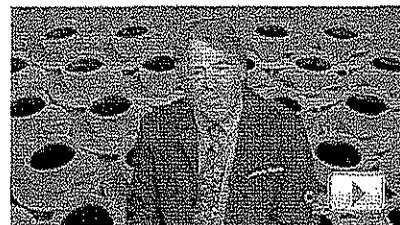


Digital Cameras



Washing Machines

Nobody Tests Like We Do



Our testers put 100s of products through their paces

More About: Safety & Recalls | All Safety News