

CLOTH BAGS

— ONE POLLUTION SOLUTION

- **Alarming statistics —**
 - **The average Canadian uses about 145 plastic bags a year.**
 - **The average household uses 8.8 kilograms of bags every year.**
 - **30,000 bags are used weekly in the Walden area.**
 - **The city of Ottawa uses 36,000,000 bags annually.**
 - **4,680,000,000 bags are used in Canada annually.**
 - **In the US, 100 billion plastic bags are used annually. Their manufacture requires 12 million barrels of oil.**
 - **Most plastic bags are made of polyethylene (polythene) which takes up to 1,000 years to decompose.**

- **Recycling plastic bags is not the answer. Their manufacture adds to environmental pollution, uses energy and consumes a lot of oil, a non-renewable resource. Further, only about 30% of CGS households recycle plastic bags.**

- **In the North Pacific alone, about 100,000 marine mammals die annually because of plastic litter in the ocean. Plastic bags carpeting the floor of the St. Lawrence Seaway threaten whales and other marine life.**

- **The Good News —**
 - **Bans on plastic bags are either already in effect or are being phased in in Australia, Bangladesh, Bombay, France, India, and Ireland, as well as in several American cities.**
 - **In Canada, Leaf Rapids, Manitoba has banned plastic bags.**
 - **Discussions about eliminating plastic bags are underway in Sault Ste. Marie and North Bay.**
 - **Plastic bag manufacturers are developing biodegradable products.**

OUR CHALLENGE TO YOU

Canadians use 4.6 billion plastic grocery bags every year. As the information overleaf shows, these bags cause ecological damage and are an unwise use of non-renewable resources.

INSTEAD OF ADDING TO THE PROBLEM,
BECOME PART OF THE SOLUTION. HERE'S HOW –

- Count how many plastic grocery bags come into your house in one month. You'll be surprised at the number.
- Try to cut that number in half over the next three months by using boxes or cloth bags.
- Stop using plastic grocery bags entirely over the next year.

OTHER WAYS YOU CAN HELP

- Encourage your family and friends to reduce or eliminate their use of plastic grocery bags by using boxes or cloth bags.
- Give a copy of our fact sheet to people and organizations in your community.
- Lobby government officials to limit or ban the use of these bags. Government measures can range from a levy on disposable plastic bags to legislation phasing in a ban on their use.
- Encourage local retailers and their staff to promote the use of reusable containers for carrying groceries. They can do this by charging for plastic bags and/or making low-cost alternatives available.
- Send us a letter of support for this project, either from yourself or from an organization you belong to. Please direct your letter to:
The Penage Road Women's Institute
26 Anna Road, Whitefish, ON P0M 3E0
c/o Neeltje Van Roon, Secretary
daleandneeltje@personainternet.com