



## News Release

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For Immediate Release

July 31, 2009

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### **ACC SUPPORTS “GOT YOUR BAGS?” CAMPAIGN IN CALIFORNIA**

#### *Statewide Effort Seeks to Promote Reusable Shopping Bags and Plastic Bag Recycling*

ARLINGTON, VA (July 31, 2009) – Today non-profit, government and business groups joined together to kick off the “Got Your Bags?” campaign in San Jose – a statewide public education effort aimed at encouraging Californians to use reusable bags for shopping and bring plastic bags back to the store for recycling.

California state law (AB 2449) requires grocery stores and pharmacies with more than 10,000 square feet of retail space to provide bins for the collection and recycling of plastic shopping bags. Yet research shows that consumer awareness remains low, and shoppers often forget to bring their bags back to the store. The same holds true for reusable bags.

Led by the non-profit Keep California Beautiful, the “Got Your Bags?” campaign seeks to change that consumer behavior by promoting the “three R’s” for bags – reduce, reuse and recycle.

The American Chemistry Council, which includes the Progressive Bag Affiliates – a group of leading manufacturers and recyclers of plastic bags and plastic resins in the United States – is participating in the effort. “Plastic bags and wraps are too valuable to waste and should be recycled. We are delighted to work with Keep California Beautiful and other partners to help promote the use of reusable bags as well as access to convenient recycling for San Jose residents,” said Tim Shestek, senior director of state affairs with the American Chemistry Council.

“Through the ‘Got Your Bags?’ campaign we hope to raise awareness of the myriad plastics that can be recycled through these programs – not just shopping bags, but bags from dry cleaning, news papers, bread and produce, as well as product wraps from paper towels, bathroom tissue, diapers, and cases of soft drinks,” Shestek said.

The American Chemistry Council contributed funding for educational materials and other tools in support of the program. A key part of ACC’s involvement will include the collection of data to help inform other plastic bag recycling programs of the importance of enhanced consumer education and increased visibility of collection areas.

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Wide scale recycling of plastic bags and product wraps is a relatively recent, but rapidly growing, trend. The recycling of plastic bags and wraps increased 27 percent nationwide from 2005 to 2007, and the rate of recycling these products climbed to 12 percent. Programs like the “Got Your Bags?” campaign in California and other public policy initiatives, including laws in New York, Rhode Island and Delaware mandating at-store plastic bag recycling, will help fuel continued growth.

Recently, the Progressive Bag Affiliates announced a landmark recycling goal of 40 percent recycled content, including 25 percent post-consumer material, in all plastic shopping bags made by these companies by 2015. When fully implemented, the [Full Circle Recycling Initiative](#) will reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 463 million pounds, conserve enough energy (mainly natural gas) to heat 200,000 homes, and reduce waste by 300 million pounds every year. More information is available at [www.americanchemistry.com/fullcircle](http://www.americanchemistry.com/fullcircle).

### **About the Progressive Bag Affiliates**

The Progressive Bag Affiliates of the American Chemistry Council promote the responsible use and recycling of plastic bags. The PBA recycling toolkit is being used by retailers around the nation as a reference for determining the best ways to deploy effective recycling solutions in stores. To learn more about increasing plastic bag recycling, please visit [www.plasticbagrecycling.org](http://www.plasticbagrecycling.org).

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