

ISRI Position on Bans and Fees for Recyclable Paper and Plastic Bags¹

Overview: The position was developed in response to several high profile municipalities either banning or placing fees on plastic or paper bags. As the topic is still controversial and municipalities are still debating on whether to ban this material, the position gives ISRI the guidance needed to navigate this issue. Additionally, it provides stakeholders information on where ISRI stands on the issue.

Plastic film is a highly recyclable resource which has viable, sustainable markets. The fiber recovered from paper bags is a highly sought after material used in the manufacture of many types of products. Banning or placing fees on this material reduces the ability of the material to be recovered.

Therefore, it is the position that the Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries, Inc. (ISRI):

- Promotes a free and fair, competitive, market-based system for the trade of recyclable materials such as paper and plastic bags.
- Supports a competitive marketplace that does not restrict, direct or interfere with the free flow of recyclable materials.
- Opposes bans and fees on paper and plastic bags that are being manufactured into useful commodity grade materials and sold into viable, commercial markets without subsidies or noncompetitive, fixed pricing.
- Promotes the proper recycling and economic opportunities associated with the collection, processing and reuse in finished products such as paper and plastic bags.
- Supports requiring retailers to provide convenient collection for recycling of plastic bags offered in their stores.
- Opposes the addition of plastic bags to curbside collection programs. Should the material be placed in a curbside bin, the material will become contaminated and its ability to be recycled reduced or eliminated.

¹ As Adopted by the ISRI Board of Directors on July 24, 2013