



FSPCF
FAR SOUTH PENINSULA COMMUNITY FORUM

P.O. Box 43825
Fish Hoek
7974

Dear Min. Edna Molewa,

17 June 2017

RE: NON-RECYCLABLE PLASTIC BAGS

We are writing to ask you to ban non-recyclable plastic shopping bags which currently include most South African retailers' plastic shopping bags. We discovered that, with the exception of Checkers bags **THEY ARE MOSTLY NOT RECYCLABLE**. Our local recycler informed us that the big plastic collectors are no longer buying the plastic shopping bags. As a result these are dumped at landfill sites.

THE SITUATION is made worse by the **DECEPTIVE** recycling logos and other text encouraging recycling even though many recyclers won't take the bags because of chalk additives.

The packaging and retail industries' failure to monitor and police themselves requires an independent agent such as your department to enforce a standard for recyclable plastic bags and to ban non- recyclable single-use carrier bags. Actually this ban should apply to all non- recyclable single use plastic packaging. These bans are already happening in countries committed to environmental wellbeing which, as you know, is directly linked to human wellbeing.

Our understanding of the government's attempt to create a NRCS approval system for plastic shopping bags was to ensure that the bags are of sufficient thickness to make recycling viable. **The use of additives by industry is in contempt of this intention and should be illegal. The fact that many bags display recycling logos in addition to the polymer logo is deceitful.** See attached table of the logos etc on well-known brands of plastic shopping bags.

We have been told by Mr Hanekom of PlasticsSA that industry has set up a working group to find a solution by the end of June 2017. While this is a positive initiative, our concern is that there are no independent environmental voices on this working group and even if industry sets an environmentally acceptable standard, who **WILL POLICE IT** and how? What about standards for imported plastic bags?

We believe that government needs to set a standard that all plastic shopping bags are recyclable and preferably also made from a minimum percentage of recycled polymer. As the government already claims a levy for each bag sold, there are funds available to do tests on suppliers to ensure conformity and to fine suppliers who produce non- recyclable bags.

Plastic bags are not our national flower. They do not belong in our environment. Recycling is part of a green economy and supports job creation. Please use your authority to enforce Extended Producer Responsibility in the plastics industry so that they are required to adopt a circular economy and the recycling of plastic packaging. While this may add a direct financial cost to plastic bags, it **HELPS** ensure that an indirect cost of pollution is not carried by the environment and ultimately people.

We look forward to your support.

With Regards,
Kim Kruyshaar

on behalf of the Waste Reduction Team of the Far South Peninsula Community Forum