



June 2015

AF&PA advocates for market-based policies and consumer choice in packaging materials. We oppose mandates and taxes on products such as paper bags that people recycle after they use and reuse them to carry and store products.

Renewable

Paper bags are made from a renewable resource—trees, which remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

- In 2011, U.S. forests and wood products captured and stored roughly 16 percent of all carbon dioxide emitted by fossil fuel consumption in the United States.
- On average, about two-thirds of the power used to make paper comes from carbon-neutral biomass.

Recyclable

The recovery rate for paper bags is four times greater than that of plastic bags.

- Paper bags' and sacks' recovery rate is 49.5 percent, which helps keep them out of landfills and extends the fiber supply, according to the EPA (2009).
- In 2014, 96 percent of the U.S. population had access to paper and paperboard community recycling programs.
- The U.S. paper recovery rate reached 65.4 percent in 2014 – meeting or exceeding 63 percent for the past 6 years.

Compostable

- Paper bags are ideal as a container to hold compostable waste.
- Readily compostable, paper bags are used throughout the country in municipal leaf mulching programs.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

- Paper bags help reduce greenhouse gas emissions by requiring less energy to produce than plastic bags.
- When biomass such as wood is combusted for energy, it releases carbon dioxide that it had absorbed during growth back into the atmosphere. When harvested biomass is replanted, it once again absorbs carbon dioxide.