

**AB 1998 WOULD BAN PLASTIC BAGS AND PERMIT PAPER BAGS,
THEREBY MASSIVELY INCREASING GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS
WHY ARE ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS REMAINING SILENT ABOUT THIS ISSUE?
WHY HAS CALIFORNIA EPA NOT ALERTED THE LEGISLATURE TO THIS ISSUE?**

AB 1998 would ban plastic bags and allow them to be replaced by paper bags. If the bill becomes law, there will be a **massive** increase in greenhouse gases (GHG).

AB 1998 would result in the annual CO₂ equivalent of between 92,280 and 212,243 passenger vehicles.



A pulp and paper mill

Environmental groups and politicians who are obsessed with banning plastic bags should stop *pretending* that the public will switch to reusable bags rather than taking paper bags. As we have seen in San Francisco, the [hard evidence](#) is that consumers will *not* switch to reusable bags if paper bags are available. In San Francisco, they have switched to paper bags. AB 1998 would require stores to charge five cents for a paper bag, but that tiny amount would have almost no impact on reducing the number of paper bags.

CALCULATION OF GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

The calculations below are based on the following assumptions: 20 billion plastic carryout bags are used statewide annually. 13.33 billion paper bags would replace 20 billion plastic bags. (1 paper bag would replace 1.5 plastic bags because paper bags are generally bigger and hold more). Paper bags would be required to contain 40% post-consumer recycled content. Consumers would be required to pay five cents per paper bag. Greenhouse gas emissions metrics are based on the [Scottish report](#) and the [Boustead report](#).

Based on a 2.0 times worse greenhouse gas (GHG) impact (i.e. the best case least environmentally damaging scenario in the [Boustead report](#)):

- *Increase* in GHG per 1,000 paper bags = 0.04 CO₂ equivalent tons (per [Boustead report](#) at page 4)
- 13.3 billion paper bags divided by 1,000 = 13.3 million
- 13.3 million x 0.04 = 532,000 added CO₂ equivalent tons

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency [calculator](#), that is equivalent to:

- **Annual CO₂ emissions from 92,280 passenger vehicles**
- **Annual CO₂ emissions from 54,288,218 gallons of gasoline consumed**
- **Annual CO₂ emissions from 1,122,377 barrels of oil consumed**
- **Annual CO₂ emissions from 6,444 tanker truck's worth of gasoline**
- **Annual CO₂ emissions from the total electricity use of 58,571 homes**
- **Annual CO₂ emissions from the total energy use of 41,074 homes**

Based on a 3.3 times worse greenhouse gas (GHG) impact (i.e. the scenario in the [Scottish report](#) at page 23):

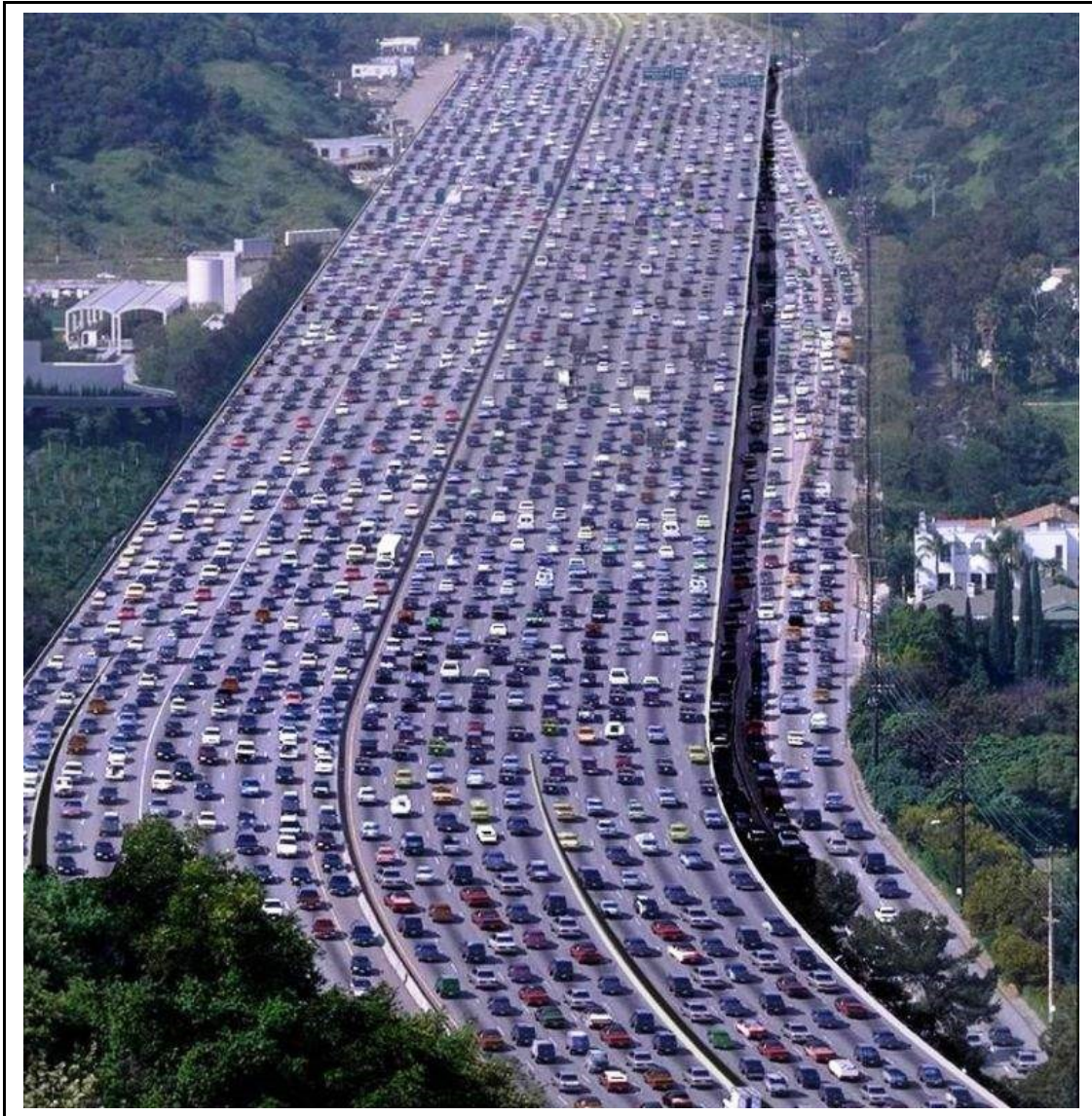
- *Increase* in GHG per 1,000 paper bags = 0.092 CO₂ equivalent tons
- 13.3 billion paper bags divided by 1,000 = 13.3 million
- 13.3 million x 0.092 = 1,223,600 added CO₂ equivalent tons

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency [calculator](#), that is equivalent to:

- **Annual CO₂ emissions from 212,243 passenger vehicles**
- **Annual CO₂ emissions from 124,862,902 gallons of gasoline consumed**
- **Annual CO₂ emissions from 2,581,468 barrels of oil consumed**
- **Annual CO₂ emissions from 14,822 tanker truck's worth of gasoline**
- **Annual CO₂ emissions from the total electricity use of 134,713 homes**
- **Annual CO₂ emissions from the total energy use of 94,471 homes**

The fact that plastic bags do not degrade in landfills “for a thousand years” is an environmental benefit. Why? *Because the CO₂ is trapped in the bags.* The U.S. Government is trying to find ways to [trap](#) greenhouse gases underground. The State of California is trying to find ways to [prevent](#) greenhouse gases from escaping from landfills. Plastic does it automatically! In contrast, when paper decomposes in a landfill it emits methane, which is a greenhouse gas with 23 times the global warming power of CO₂.

CO₂ emissions have a major [impact](#) on ocean acidification and marine life. The Legislature will do far more harm than good to the marine environment by passing AB 1998.



Statewide plastic bag bans would result in the **annual** CO₂ equivalent of between 92,280 and 212,243 passenger vehicles