

# Paper or Plastic

<https://www.sierraclub.org/sierra/ask-mr-green/whats-better-for-environment-paper-bags-or-plastic-bags>

<http://allaboutbags.ca/papervplastic.html>

How one might read The Sierra Club site:

- “paper is probably better, for the simple reason that it is much more likely to decompose” - “probably” is a weasel word. It sounds like an affirmation but isn’t.
- ”more likely to decompose” - “likely” is also a weasel word. It sounds like an affirmation but isn’t.
- “In California alone, 123,000 tons of plastic bags are tossed out each year, and a fair number end up as ocean litter.” - “fair” does not define quantity. It is a meaningless term.

Not mentioned is the fact that 95% of the plastic polluting the world’s oceans comes from just 10 rivers - eight of which are in Asia, one in India, and one in West Africa - where rivers are used for waste disposal - a literal waste stream. The problem of plastic pollution is a littering and waste disposal problem. It’s an interesting parallel to the pro-gun lobby’s argument - it’s not the gun (plastic) that’s the problem it’s the person who uses it (the litterer) that’s the problem.

In my community the reusable grocery bags (the ones you forget in the car or at home) cannot be recycled and end up in the landfill.

Interestingly my grocery store charges 10¢ for a paper bag but only 5¢ for a plastic bag - thereby encouraging the use of plastic grocery bags over paper.