



*submitted by
marion axmith*

**DEPUTATION OF MARION AXMITH TO CITY OF TORONTO EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE ON EX20.2 VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTION OF THE PLASTIC
BAG FEE PROCEEDS – MAY 14, 2012**

I AM MARION AXMITH, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE CANADIAN PLASTICS
INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION. I AM HERE TODAY TO VOICE THE OPPOSITION OF
THE PLASTICS INDUSTRY TO THE BAG FEE REDIRECT MOTION.

OUR INDUSTRY IS GUIDED BY 3 CORE PRINCIPLES

- **TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION** – A DESIRE TO BUILD A BETTER WORLD
- A STRONG COMMITMENT TO **ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP**
- AND **PARTNERSHIP** – WORKING IN COLLABORATION WITH
GOVERNMENTS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS TO SOLVE CRITICAL
PROBLEMS

OUR PRODUCTS PROTECT AND SAVE LIVES & HELP THE ENVIRONMENT.

FROM KEVLAR VESTS, TO SEAT BELTS & AIR BAGS, TO KNEE AND HIP
JOINTS, TO PROTECTIVE FOOD PACKAGING, OUR PRODUCTS ARE
ENGINEERED TO SOLVE SOCIETAL PROBLEMS. INCLUDING THE
COMPOSITE PLASTICS USED FOR THE LARGE BLADES ON WIND MILLS.

PLASTICS ARE USED TO BUILD SOLUTIONS.

THE IRONY OF THE MOTION BEFORE YOU TODAY IS THAT PLASTIC
SHOPPING BAGS WERE FIRST INTRODUCED AS A **SOLUTION** TO PROTECT
TREES AND PREVENT CLEAR CUTTING OF OUR FORESTS.

THE MOTION STATES “... THAT PLASTIC BAGS ARE HARMFUL TO OUR
ECOLOGY ...” THIS IS SIMPLY NOT TRUE.

PLASTIC SHOPPING BAGS ARE NOT AND HAVE NEVER BEEN AN
ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEM IN THE CITY OF TORONTO. STUDIES SHOWS
THAT THE BAGS ARE LESS THAN 1% OF LANDFILL AND ONLY 3/100'S OF
1% OF LITTER.

WE TAKE PRODUCT STEWARDSHIP VERY SERIOUSLY. FOR THE PAST 15
YEARS, WE HAVE BEEN WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH CITY STAFF TO
BUILD A STATE OF THE ART ENVIRONMENTAL SOLUTION FOR THE
RECOVERY AND RECYCLING OF PLASTIC SHOPPING BAGS AND FILM.

PLASTIC SHOPPING BAGS ARE USED IN THE CITY'S GREEN BIN PROGRAM, CAN BE RECYCLED IN THE BLUE BIN, AND ARE REMANUFACTURED LOCALLY INTO WATER PIPES, OUTDOOR FURNITURE, OFFICE SUPPLIES ... EXTENDING THE LIFE OF THIS VALUABLE RESOURCE.

THERE ARE NO WINNERS WITH THIS MOTION ... NOT THE TREE CANOPY, NOT LOCAL EMPLOYMENT ... CERTAINLY NOT TORONTO'S CHARITABLE SECTOR.

ON LOCAL EMPLOYMENT AND INVESTMENT: THE BAGS BEING AFFECTED BY THIS MOTION ARE PRODUCED RIGHT HERE IN ONTARIO – CREATING 11,000 JOBS, 50% OF THOSE RIGHT HERE IN THE GTA.

AND WHAT ABOUT THE CHARITABLE SECTOR ... WITH THE CITY ASKING RETAILERS TO REDIRECT THEIR CHARITABLE DONATIONS TIED TO THE BAG FEE FROM WORTHY CHARITIES THAT ARE HELPING CANCER PATIENTS, UNDERPRIVILEGED CHILDREN, AND PROTECTING POLAR BEARS THROUGH THE WORLD WILDLIFE FUND.

THE BIGGEST LOSER WILL BE THE TREE CANOPY. REDIRECTION OF BAGS FEES CONTEMPLATED WILL GENERATE LITTLE MONEY BECAUSE THE FUNDS POTENTIALLY AVAILABLE AS VOLUNTARY DONATIONS ARE **MINISCULE** ... IN THE ORDER OF THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS BECAUSE OF THE 70% REDUCTION IN THE NUMBER OF BAGS ... WHEN THE CITY NEEDS \$78 MILLION FOR THE REMEDIATION EFFORT.

THE PROBLEM IS THAT THE ORIGINAL IMPETUS FOR THE REDIRECT MOTION WAS FINANCIAL, NOT ENVIRONMENTAL ... AN ATTEMPT AFTER 13 YEARS TO TREAT THE BAG FEE AS A "TAX" ... TO GENERATE MORE REVENUE FOR THE CITY BY TAPPING INTO BAG FEES VIA A VOLUNTARY "DONATION" REGIME.

THE MOTION CERTAINLY ADDS AN INTERESTING LEVEL OF LEGAL COMPLEXITY TO THE INTENT OF THE ORIGINAL BY-LAW ... PARTICULARLY IF THE CITY ISSUES A "TAX" RECEIPT FOR A DONATION AND DIRECTLY ASCRIBES IT TO BAG FEES LEGISLATED BY THAT SAME LEVEL OF GOVERNMENT.

THE POINT IS THAT THE TREE CANOPY IS AN IMPORTANT ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVE ... TOO IMPORTANT TO BE TREATED IN THIS AD HOC AND LIMITING MANNER.

THE TREE CANOPY INITIATIVE NEEDS TO BE DELINKED FROM THE BAG FEE AND BECOME MUCH MORE INCLUSIVE APPEALING TO A BROADER DONOR BASE ... INCLUDING RESIDENTS AND CORPORATIONS ...

THIS WAY THERE IS POTENTIAL TO RAISE MILLIONS, NOT JUST THOUSANDS.

THE PLASTICS INDUSTRY IS WILLING TO HELP WITH THIS EFFORT, BUT IT CANNOT ALIGN ITSELF WITH AN INITIATIVE THAT UNFAIRLY PORTRAYS PLASTICS AND ITS PRODUCTS AS ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS.

OUR FOCUS TODAY IS NOT ON RESCINDMENT BUT A REQUEST TO STOP THIS KIND OF ADVERSARIAL AND NEGATIVE APPROACH THAT UNFAIRLY UNDERMINES INVESTMENT AND JOBS AND PORTRAYS US AS BAD ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDS.

WE ASK THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE TO VOTE DOWN THE MOTION TO ASK RETAILERS TO VOLUNTARILY REDIRECT THEIR BAG FEE REVENUES TO THE CITY.