



CanDo's Compost Corner 6.23.20

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Our world IS out-of-balance, but I guess my hope is that more people than ever finally realize the extent of the injustice and imbalance, and we finally change the systems. There is no time to nibble at the edges of white supremacy, racial and economic inequality, global public health and climate change. So, we all should be angry, scared and hopeful!

On the topic of plastic bags, I just don't see it as likely at all that we would accept plastic bags for recycling, even just a one-time special collection. The reality is that they are a low-grade material that has very little (if any) market value as a recyclable...and with the low cost of oil and virgin plastic, plastic bags and film are as worthless as ever. Store collection has always been somewhat tenuous in my mind. It is a holdover from when stores were required to collect plastic bags (before the bag bans), and really just functioned OK because stores could "dilute" the lower-grade film in with the higher grade shrink wrap. Also, it's a PR campaign by the plastics/oil/chemical industry to try and make it seem like their crappy, wasteful single-use products are actually recyclable. After all, plasticfilmrecycling.org - the plastic bag recycling campaign - is a product of the American Chemistry Council (the trade group for the plastics industry).

So, what should you do with plastic film/plastic bags going forward? Well, if the stores start taking the drop off again, that will be an option. Otherwise they just need to go in the trash. You'll probably feel kind of bad about sending them to the landfill. (Just please don't put them in the blue recycling bin - that's just making it worse for us.) Maybe you'll feel kind of angry too, which I think is what we need to finally get some overarching single-use plastics legislation to go into effect at the State level.

There is a proposed state ballot initiative to require all single-use packaging be reusable, recyclable or compostable by 2030 - the Plastics Free California initiative. It was really close to getting on the ballot this year before the pandemic struck and left them 40,000-50,000 signatures short. Now, they have just a few more days to get the remaining signatures so it can qualify for the 2022 election.

California law (which clearly was written w/o pandemics in mind) requires original signatures, so you need to mail it in - Read about the ballot measure and find out how you can print out, sign and mail back your petition at <https://plasticsfreeca.org/>

There is also a similar state law, SB 54/AB 1080, with the goal of eliminating non-recyclable and non-compostable packaging and products, that came really close to passing last year and was scheduled to be taken up again this year. It's still under consideration but will most likely not be taken back up until after the pandemic has passed. When it is back up for consideration, I'll make sure to share ways to help get it over the finish line and into law.

Thanks,
Tim