



PRESS RELEASE

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2.25 mil Plastic Bags Pass Test at Seattle Material Recovery Facility *Thicker bags are alternative allowed in Washington's Reusable Bag bill*

SEATTLE, WA – King County recycling processor, Recology CleanScapes, conducted a test of 2.25 mil thick plastic bags at their Seattle Material Recovery Facility this week. Tests concluded that unlike traditional single-use plastic bags which wrap around and jam recycling facility equipment, 2.25 mil plastic bags can be processed without the negative impact to recycling equipment.

Testing was conducted in advance of the Reusable Bag Bill (SB 5323) currently being considered by state lawmakers that would phase out the use of single-use plastic bags in favor of paper and reusable alternatives.

Single-use plastic bags have long been a challenge for recyclers. When loose plastic bags are sent to recycling facilities, they wrap around spinning screens, diminishing the screens ability to effectively sort materials.

The resulting loss of sorting efficiency increases throughout the day. During the first two hours of operation, plastic bag and film accumulation results in a loss of efficiency of roughly 25%. At 4 hours, efficiency moves to 50%, meaning that 50% of material is incorrectly identified by technology and requires employees to manually sort. At 6 hours, the sorting process operates at 25% efficiency, and by the end of a shift, the screen resembles a conveyor belt and is extremely ineffective at sorting due to the massive accumulation of plastic bags and film.

Recology Cleanscapes is a subsidiary of Recology, an employee-owned company that sees a world without waste, where resources are used and re-used in a sustainable ecosystem that strives for their best and highest use.

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