

REDUCING PLASTIC BAG USE CAN TAKE MULTIPLE FORMS

The use of plastic bags creates a negative externality—an external cost that is imposed on non-users or bystanders not a part of the market interaction. Reducing these negative externalities can be accomplished with taxes or fees, command-and-control standards, and nudges.



Johane Dikgang, PhD

Associate Professor of Environmental Economics,
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Dr. Dikgang studied economics because it offered a wide range of career paths and job opportunities across many sectors of business. His research encompasses environmental economics and policy, all emphasizing practical, real-world challenges. He says that the plastic bag problem is a market failure that requires policy intervention. Dr. Dikgang recommends the right tax level for plastic bags to reduce use without leading to other harms. Learn more: *"Influences of various pricing points"*. 2022. *JAE*. doi.org/10.1080/15140326.2022.2124085.



Rebecca Taylor, PhD

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As a researcher, Dr. Taylor is able to study what she finds most interesting, such as environmental and food issues. She works to fill knowledge gaps about how consumers respond to different environmental regulations. Her research shows that both bag bans and bag fees increase the use of reusable bags. However, bans on thin plastic bags have the unintended consequence of shifting customers towards thicker bags that can have their own environmental externalities. Learn more: *"Bans vs. Fees: Disposable Carryout Bag Policies and Bag Usage"*. 2016. *AAEA*. doi.org/10.1093/aepp/ppv025.



Jerrod Penn, PhD

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Professor Penn chose economics as a career once he understood that economics research could help understand and provide guidance on environmental issues. His research focuses on measuring peoples' preferences and behavior. He believes that behavioral approaches to sustainability can be effective without government involvement or rules. Learn more: *"Nudging Away from Plastic Bags with Charitable Donations"*. 2022. *Land Economics*.

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