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Paper Bag Industry Takes Exception to Retailer Comment

(February 9, 2016) Canada’s paper bag industry takes strong exception to the claim by Nathalie St-Pierre, vice-president of the Retail Council of Canada, Quebec, that paper bags are much more “damageable” to the environment than plastic bags.

St-Pierre made the claim this week while being interviewed by Global TV on the City of Brossard’s proposed ban on single-use plastic bags.

“Environmental life cycle assessment (LCA) results have not provided a clear answer regarding the relative environmental performance of paper versus plastic grocery bags,” says John Mullinder, executive director of the industry’s environmental council, PPEC. “Paper bags have some attributes, plastic has others. And using life cycle studies that have little relationship to how bags are actually made in Canada is very misleading.”

“For example, no current studies adequately recognise the Canadian paper industry’s high use of wood chips and sawmill residues to make bags, or its use of renewable energy (carbon-neutral biomass). Nor have any LCAs properly taken into account the effect of plastic litter on aquatic and marine ecosystems. Unlike traditional plastic bags, paper bags are readily biodegradable. They do not catch in trees, do not clog water grates and cause flooding, and do not accumulate in streams, lakes and oceans.”

“Frankly,” says Mullinder, “people should check their facts before making such broad generalisations. We are not in favour of bans on materials in the marketplace either, but don’t denigrate paper just because you don’t want a ban on plastic.”

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The Paper and Paperboard Packaging Environmental Council (PPEC) is a national trade association representing the Canadian paper packaging industry on environmental issues. Its membership includes paper mills producing containerboard, boxboard, and kraft paper packaging grades and the converters who turn this into corrugated boxes, paper bags and sacks, and boxboard or paperboard cartons. Associate members include material processors and recyclers, and suppliers of other goods and services to the industry.



PPEC has four websites:

[PPEC](#)

[Corrugated Boxes Canada](#)

[Paper Boxes Canada](#)

[Paper Bags Canada](#)