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Bag It

In this touching and often flat-out-funny film, we follow “everyman” Jeb Berrier, who is admittedly not a tree hugger, as he embarks on a global tour to unravel the complexities of our plastic world.

What starts as a film about plastic bags evolves into a wholesale investigation into plastic and its affect on our waterways, oceans, and even our own bodies. We see how our crazy-for-plastic world has finally caught up to us and what we can do about it.

The team has made a truly accessible film which uses humour to appeal to as wide an audience as possible, leaving viewers feeling empowered, and ready to take action in big ways and small to reduce their plastic consumption.

Production Budget
\$250,000

WHAT THE CRITICS SAID

Ellen Degeneres on Twitter:

“Just watched an amazing documentary called *Bag It* about how bad plastic bags are for the environment. I’m done using them. Who’s with me?”

Movie Habit

“Humble documentary makes a non-biodegradable impression.”

Wend Magazine

“Outrage over the seemingly irreparable harm imposed upon the planet and our personal health is compelling many to make proactive choices to rid their lives of plastic single-use disposable containers.

The film *Bag It*, directed by Suzan Beraza, may very well prompt eco-minded consumers to make those changes permanent.”

IMDB

From 235 users

70%

The Film

WHO SAW IT

Estimated Global Audience 100 million

Cinema

USA: toured over **100** theatres across the country in April 2011 as part of the Whole Foods “Do Something Reel Film Festival”

Italy: theatrical release in **35** major cities

Broadcast

8 territories worldwide, plus Middle East and North Africa

US public television: aired a total of **354** times from April 2011-12

Since April 2012 has been screening monthly on The Documentary Channel, which reaches **25 million** households daily

Festivals

Over **80** film festivals, including Dutch Environmental Film Festival, Melbourne Environmental Film Festival, Phangan Film Festival, Thailand

Online Trailer Views

YouTube and Vimeo **117,299**

Facebook

5,835 likes

Total weekly reach of **29,934**

Bag It Blog

56,505 views with an average of 200 views per day

Website

Over **324,346** page views since 2011

DVDs sold / Downloads

May 2010 – 12
5000 sold via film website

Since March 2012

2400 via Target and Barnes & Noble

Also promoted digitally via Netflix, Gaiam Network, Amazon, Xbox, Rovi, Vudu, Youtube, Playstation and soon Hulu

AWARDS & PRIZES

Mountainfilm in Telluride - Audience Choice Award

Ashland Independent Film Festival - Audience Choice Award

Wild & Scenic Film Festival - Special Jury Award

Port Townsend Film Festival - Special Jury Award

Sedona International Film Festival - Best Environmental Film

Durango Independent Film Festival - Best Documentary

Monterey Blue Oceans Film Festival - Best of Festival Award

Eco Focus Film Festival - Special Jury Award

Flagstaff Mountain Film Festival - Audience Choice Award

Hawaii Waimea Ocean Film Festival - Audience Choice Award

Princeton Environmental Film Festival - Audience Choice Award

Reel Earth Environmental Film Festival - Audience Choice Award

THE CAMPAIGN

BAG IT CAMPAIGN AIMS

- Raise levels of public awareness surrounding environmental and health problems caused by plastic
- Change behaviour: reduce single-use plastics among consumers
- Galvanise communities to adopt voluntary or legislative bag bans

HOW THE CAMPAIGN WORKED

The *Bag It* campaign built on an extensive festival tour of the USA with further community screenings supported by a resource-rich website. Attention to the detail of the strategy and considerable legwork enabled the team to spread their message as widely as possible.

“A strong team spirit with plenty of humour has characterised their approach”

It was intentional and well planned

The campaign to reduce plastic consumption was planned from the outset of film development and the team kept the intention throughout filming that it be fun, accessible and empowering.

They hired experts

The team recognized the benefit of hiring an experienced grassroots environmental advocate, Emily Utter, to conduct extensive outreach and relationship building on a grassroots level in conjunction with community screenings.

There was team commitment

A strong team spirit with plenty of humour has characterized their approach and paid dividends when reaching out to communities: *“Thanks to Jeb Berrier and his easy going ways, he can seemingly win over any crowd with a few laughs. This strategy has been invaluable for getting large communities to come on board.”* Michelle Hill, Producer

The components of the campaign were:

Raising Awareness

USA wide community screening program.

- Film Sprout, a distribution and outreach firm, and



the film team booked 484 screenings through various schools and community organizations in 283 cities across the United States and worldwide

- In addition, New Day, an educational distributor, has hosted 379 events since June 2011 – resulting in an estimated 30,000 further viewers
- Screened as part of Whole Foods “Do Something Reel” Film Festival which travelled to 91 cities in April 2011 with an estimated audience of 43,000
- Constellation TV hosted 6 online screenings in 2011 with prominent celebrities, with a Q&A after. Hosts included international singer/songwriter/activist Jack Johnson and actor Ed Begley, Jr., among others
- Mountainfilm on Tour hosted a dozen screenings and Q&A’s around the U.S., including a screening at Lincoln Center in NYC

Education

- Creation of two shorter, educational cuts for schools, and work with two curriculum specialists to design a 20-page curriculum guide for schools

- Extensive advocacy: the campaign hired young assistants, bought email lists and sent personal emails to over 10,000 educators, librarians and activists
- Creation of a website which was to be a “go to” resource for plastic pollution solutions, which would inspire individuals to get involved and take action. Extensive toolkits and advocacy materials were created that could be downloaded from the website: www.bagitmovie.com

Three other innovative strategies to help educators disseminate *Bag It* included:

- “*Bag It* Educational Advocate Program” where donors can purchase a ten-pack of educational screening licenses at a discount price to offer to schools of their choice;
- “*Bag It* Educational Grant,” where budget-stressed schools can apply for assistance in purchasing a screening license
- The “*Bag It* Plastic Free Project” will launch next year as a context for schools to see who can create the most impactful plastic-reduction project.

These programs have been marketed through the team’s email blasts and social media outlets, inspiring more people to get involved.

Community Change: *Bag It* Town Campaign

The team hired a policy director, Emily Utter, to implement the *Bag It* Town Campaign who had several years of experience working on bag-related issues and policy change. Emily has been a point person for inquiries around business outreach, building public awareness, and proposing legislation.

The campaign charted communities around the country who are interested in working towards legislative change in their towns. In August 2012 alone Emily is working with 117 individuals, communities or organizations to institute change.

“Bag Monsters have been spotted protesting from California to the steps of the White House”

Take Part - the social action network of Participant Media - partnered with *Bag It* for their “30 Days, 30 Ways” action campaign. The action on April 22, 2012 was to “Become a *Bag It* Town” and they linked to their website and campaign.



Bag Monsters have travelled the USA to raise awareness about plastic pollution issues, asking local grocers and Walmarts to give up the bag, as well as telling people about local *Bag It* screenings. Bag Monsters have been spotted protesting from California to the steps of the White House.

CAMPAIGN IMPACT & ACHIEVEMENTS

Raising Public Awareness

Since May 2010 this film has been screened at an amazing 863 educational and community screenings – far surpassing original goals.

Due to grassroots partnering the film has succeeded in bringing widespread awareness to the plastic issue. It is a testament to the film's effectiveness that a considerable number of individuals contact the filmmakers daily to discuss how they notice the preponderance of plastic everywhere, and how they have personally reduced their use of plastic packaging and products.

Film Sprout, who organised 484 outreach screenings, surveyed screening hosts and found that 89% found *Bag It* useful in raising awareness and building capacity for their organisations.

Bag Bans

The “*Bag It Town Campaign*”, has positively influenced bag ban campaigns across the USA, and beyond, most notably Australia where activist Tim Silverwood, founder of “Take 3 - A Clean Beach Initiative,” watched *Bag It* and then used it as a central part of his campaign to create awareness, screening it more than 50 times, to an estimated 3,000 people.

“Since the film’s release there have been 26 bag bans”

Back in the USA, *Bag It* helped Aspen, Colorado successfully pass a bag ban in October 2011.

“One of the consistent themes we heard from concerned citizens was, ‘I saw the movie Bag It.’ The film, which has been shown numerous times throughout our area, has been an incredible tool in showing people the impacts of plastics and single-use disposables.” Amelia Potvin, Community Office for Resource Efficiency, Aspen, Colorado.

Numerous communities screened *Bag It* to help promote successful bag legislation. Notable cities that have used *Bag It* to help pass legislation include: Seattle, WA; Los Angeles, CA; Portland, OR; Kaua’i County, HI; Santa Monica, CA; among others.

The “*Bag It Town Campaign*” has had a direct impact on the expansion of San Francisco’s bag ban to include all retailers and a charge for paper bags. “*Bag It* was a great resource for us as we considered an expansion of San Francisco’s plastic bag ban. The film itself was informative and inspiring, and our meetings with Policy Director Emily Utter were helpful in sorting out the details of the legislation,” said Judson True, legislative aide to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors.



Los Angeles, CA, the second largest city in the US with over 3,792,600 residents, recently voted to ban plastic bags. This was a huge win for the movement because the city faced a legal challenge from an industry group, the “Save the Plastic Bag Coalition.” The team heard from a number of partner organizations in Los Angeles who hosted screenings of *Bag It*, that the film helped them tremendously in their education and lobbying efforts.

Senate Bill 3442 proposed to make the ban of plastic bags illegal for all towns in Illinois. Part of the *Bag It* campaign posted a petition on Change.org which has now received 150,000+ signatures, one of the top environmental campaigns in Change.org’s history.

In the ten years before *Bag It* was released there were 11 bag bans in the USA. Since the film’s release in May 2010 there have been 26 bag bans and the team continues to work to lobby for more.



CAMPAIGN NUTS & BOLTS

Campaign Budget

\$102,700

Length of Campaign

May 2010 – present (ongoing)

Principal Partners

The campaign is in touch with 30 different organisations on a regular basis. The principal partners are:

Environmental Working Group

EWG focuses on the health impacts of plastic in food containers and personal care products. EWG promotes *Bag It* and plastic awareness through their strong social media arm—EWG has 100,000 plus members and sends email updates on a regular basis with links to BAG IT's Blog, where articles about the harmful effects of plastic are highlighted. Senior scientists Rebecca Sutton and Lisa Frack hosted a Q&A following the online screening of the film on Constellation TV.

Patagonia

Patagonia has been a partner since the team visited their headquarters in 2008 to learn about their recycled clothing program. Patagonia promotes its sponsored environmental projects to over 200,000 people via social media.

Surfrider Foundation

Surfrider Foundation collaborated on a “Bag Ban Toolkit” that is used by towns to develop plastic bag bans. The extensive toolkit includes guidelines on how to create an ordinance, engage the public and mount a successful campaign.

Conclusion

Bag It is a textbook example of a truly integrated campaign. From the beginning of production, the filmmakers of *Bag It* identified their target audience and focused on it continually, and worked to differentiate themselves from environmental “doom and gloom”.

They crafted a film that was humorous, informative, accessible and empowering. *Bag It* eschewed the traditional documentary film circuit, building niche audiences and working with a huge range of campaigning organisations in order to get the film seen by as many people as possible.

“the campaign team has galvanized ordinary people to change their behavior and take action”

On a very low budget, the non-profit know-how of the campaign team has succeeded in yielding real results, working at a deep level with individual communities to lobby effectively for plastic bag bans and galvanizing ordinary people to change their behavior and take action.



DIRECTOR OF BAG IT, SUZAN BERAZA

Born in Jamaica and raised in Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic, Suzan Beraza’s thought-provoking films challenge viewers to examine their lives and consider the impact of their choices. Social and environmental issues pervade her work. Her second original film, *Life’s a Beach* (2007), screened at US festivals and at Cannes Film Festival, the Guangzhou International Documentary Fest (China), as well as at many other international festivals. Suzan’s other notable films include: *Water a Clear Solution*, *Blue Planet Run* (2005), *American Outrage* (2004) and *Troubled Waters* (2006).

Founder of the Telluride Repertory Theater Company, Beraza worked as a theater director for 20 years. She created Reel Thing Productions, an independent film and media company based in Telluride, Colorado, in 1999.

She has been a guest lecturer at American University in Washington, DC.

Press Cuttings

These films attracted huge press attention. Below is a small selection of press cuttings. You can read the full articles by following the links below.

Winona 360, April 20 2011

<http://bit.ly/i73NQ3>

Southampton Patch, April 27 2011

<http://bit.ly/QEZC1R>

Examiner.com, April 27 2011

<http://exm.nr/QJ0N5b>

Northern Star, Australia, March 9 2012

<http://bit.ly/xbHOWs>

Caller, from Bag It Town Corpus

Christi, TX, June 3 2012

<http://bit.ly/Oj0b0l>

Plastic Bag Ban Report

<http://bit.ly/Pn8R9Z>

The Aspen Times, October 12 2011

<http://bit.ly/QF1cRi>

Plastic soup coming to town

9th March 2012 3:15 PM

A A 🗨

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Tags: environmental damage, environmentalist, lismore, mullumbimby, plastic bags

Central Coast (NSW) environmentalist Tim Silverwood is visiting Mullumbimby and Lismore as part of a nationwide tour following his return from a research expedition to the North Pacific Gyre, aka Great Pacific Garbage Patch. Tim will be giving presentations on his experience and showing the award winning documentary 'Bag It' with the aim of raising awareness about the consequences of plastic pollution in our oceans and the simple things people can do to make their lives a little less plastic.

Tim is a co-founder of [Take 3 - A Clean Beach Initiative](#) an organisation that asks each visitor to our beaches and waterways to simply take 3 pieces of rubbish with them when they leave. Take 3 was awarded the inaugural Taronga Zoo Green Grant in April 2011.

In July 2011, Tim spent three weeks sailing over 5000km from Honolulu to Vancouver with scientists, environmentalists, artists and filmmakers as part of the expedition coordinated by [Algalita Marine Research Foundation](#).

What he discovered is that the description of the Garbage Patch as a 'floating island' of trash is far from the truth.

"In fact it's much worse than that", said Tim. "If it were a floating island of trash it might be feasible for us to go and clean it up but unfortunately it is more like a plastic soup. Larger plastic items like bottles, bags, buckets and crates don't retain their structure for long as the sun's rays beat down and the waves toss them around, they break apart into millions and billions of plastic fragments that then remain in the ocean. They don't biodegrade though, that's the scary part."

"There is this notion that when we throw 'away' the growing amount of silly single use plastic items we use in our lives that they just go 'away'. Unfortunately, 'away' isn't always landfill or a recycling centre, a huge amount of our waste ends up in the environment and a growing amount ends up in the ocean," Tim added.

The evening will include personal accounts from Tim's adventure to the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, a Q & A and the Bag It film, which he has screened around Australia to rave reviews. "This film is fantastic in that it explains this major environmental issue in a light-hearted way that anyone can digest. The main character Jeb Berrier is an average Joe who first examines his own 'dependence' on plastic bags but uncovers the frightening world of plastics, the impact plastic is having on the environment, our oceans and even our own bodies. It's a must see film." Tim said.

Take 3 encourages every person to take an active role in reducing plastic pollution by taking 3 pieces of plastic away next time they visit the beach and encouraging people to reduce their dependence on single use disposable plastics.



Working toward a ban on the bag

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Article | 04.20.11 | By Kelsey Bewick



Laura Senefeld returns to her apartment in Winona, Minn., after a small grocery trip. She carries her reusable shopping bag on her shoulder and her bike, which she uses for transportation, up the steps of her apartment. (Photo by Kelsey Bewick/Winona360)

Expanses of bright blue Pacific Ocean water intermingle with plankton and tiny colorful pieces of broken-down plastic debris. This area of floating plastic, known as the North Pacific Subtropical Gyre or the **Great Pacific Garbage Patch**, is one of five throughout the world. It covers an area of the ocean bigger than Texas and possibly as large as the United States. The plastic, which is 40 times more prevalent than plankton, is often mistaken for food by ocean life.

Roughly 3,000 miles away, Laura Senefeld, 22, unpacked groceries from a reusable fabric shopping bag at her Winona, Minn., apartment. She transferred a head of lettuce into a worn, zip-close bag labeled "Spiced Pecan Pumpkin Bread," evidence of the bag's first use.

Following a viewing of the documentary "**Bag It**," a film that exposes the numerous problems created by disposable plastics—specifically plastic bags—three months ago at the **Frozen River Film Festival**, Senefeld was one in a crowd of at least 10 others "in cahoots," she said, about what they had watched.



Aspen adopts bag ban

Starting May 1, local grocery stores won't offer plastic bags at checkout

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Wednesday, October 12, 2011

Andre Salvail
 The Aspen Times
 Aspen, CO, Colorado

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ENLARGE

A shopper departs from the Aspen City Market Tuesday, plastic bags in hand. Starting in May, plastic won't be an option at Aspen supermarkets.
Janet Urquhart / The Aspen Times

ASPEN — It's official: Beginning in May, Aspen's two grocery stores, City Market and Clark's Market, will not provide plastic bags to shoppers during checkout.

The City Council decided in a 4-1 vote Tuesday to pass the ordinance presented by city environmental health specialist Ashley Cantrell. The measure — which faced rejection late in the two-hour discussion, when Mayor Mick Ireland offered an alternative plan to impose a fee on plastic bags for two years before a ban would go into effect— also includes a 20-cent fee on paper bags.

When Councilmen Torre and Adam Frisch indicated that they preferred to move forward with the plastic-bag ban and paper-bag fee in lieu of Ireland's compromise, the mayor and Councilman Steve Skadron decided to join them. Only Councilman Derek Johnson voted against the plan.

"I keep hearing from [Aspen residents] that they are more supportive of a ban and less supportive of a fee system," Torre said a few minutes before the vote. "I feel like we're

playing a little bit of softball with this, and I wish that ... we would just take a harder stance on this issue, as we've seen other communities do."

Frisch said he didn't understand why a majority of council members seemed to retreat from a request to the Environmental Health Department last month to retool the measure so that it reflected a ban on plastic bags. For most of the past year, up until a Sept. 12 meeting, the council and city staff appeared to be moving in the direction of a fee on each paper and plastic bag.

"To me, a ban is a better wake-up call than throwing [a fee] of a couple cents here and there to get people to make the right decisions," Frisch said.

Johnson said that after wrestling with the proposal of a fee on plastic bags for a while — he even watched the anti-plastic documentary "Bag It" at Torre's urging — he and his family started changing their shopping habits.

Update: Friends, Co-Workers Remember Keith Greene »

Government, Business

Divided Board Adopts Plastic Bag Ban in Southampton Village

Ban takes effect in six months.

By Brendan J. O'Reilly | [Email the author](#) | April 27, 2011

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With the backing of environmental advocates and over the objections of the plastics and supermarket industries, a Southampton Village Board majority adopted a ban Tuesday on plastic bags at village stores and restaurants.

The village board was slated to vote on the bill earlier this month, but it was put off due to a technical change to the legislation. A plastics lobbyist, Stephen Rosario of the American Chemistry Council, came before the board Tuesday to implore members to put off the vote again, saying a legal analysis of the legislation concluded that because of state law and court precedent "Southampton is preempted from taking action in banning plastic bags," but the board majority was not convinced.

The ban, which takes effect in six months, applies to retail stores, sidewalk sales, farmers markets, flea markets and restaurants. Yard sales, tag sales and sales by nonprofit organizations would be exempt. Checkout bags larger than 28 by 36 inches and produce bags would not be subject to the ban.



PHOTOS (4)



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Keeping An Eye On Plastic Bags

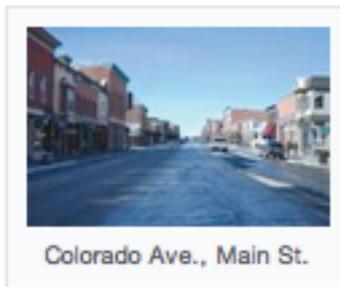


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Home » BANS » Home Town of Multi-Award Winning Film "Bag It" Bans Plastic Bags

Home Town of Multi-Award Winning Film "Bag It" Bans Plastic Bags

Posted by [Ted Duboise](#)



Colorado Ave., Main St.

Telluride, Colorado, USA, eliminates disposable plastic bags on March 1st. Well known as a ski resort, Telluride is also home to most of the people who created the movie "Bag It".(1) "Bag It", the multi-award winning film about plastic bags, which will be airing on National Public Television starting April 18th, was filmed in and around Telluride.

The Town Council heard and approved the ordinance on October 5th, 2010. The ordinance set the 'stop distribution' date as March 1st, 2011. The town-wide prohibition declares that "disposable plastic bags shall not be sold or distributed, retail or wholesale, within town limits by any business".

Citing many reasons for passing the ordinance, the Town Council stated that disposable plastic bags:

- ~ create a burden on the town's solid waste disposal system
- ~ have a significant impact on the local environment
- ~ create unsightly litter on sidewalks, streets, and waterways
- ~ clog sewers and drainage systems

They also stated that currently there is no viable option for recycling of disposable plastic shopping bags.

Strongly supporting reusable bags, the town believes that residents and visitors should use reusable carryout bags in all instances when shopping in Telluride.

The ordinance also established a 10 cents fee on paper bags if a customer needs one. The retailer will keep five cents and remit the other five cents to the *Town Waste Reduction and*

A sensible start to attacking Corpus Christi's litter problem

Posted June 3, 2012 at 3 a.m.

Discuss

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CORPUS CHRISTI — City Hall is taking a sensible approach in response to a campaign against plastic grocery bags. City staff is focusing on the root cause — littering — rather than the unsightly symptom targeted by the campaign.

The staff is recommending an educational effort and other options including a bag fee if the awareness effort doesn't show results. During a staff presentation Tuesday to the [City Council](#), Mayor Joe Adame said he'd like to see stepped-up enforcement. These suggestions are the best approach — increased awareness and a harder line against littering, reinforced by committed enforcement. The city needs to establish a deterrent that doesn't exist currently. Really, the problem isn't a lack of laws to break. It's that violators find it too easy to break the laws and get away with it.

City officials are making the right choice both in not imposing a bag fee for now and in maintaining the threat. Not only does it give litterbugs impetus to mend their ways but it preserves retailers' incentive to participate meaningfully in alternative solutions.