

## **Paper or Plastic? Neither! And here's why:**

### **Let's look at plastic bags:**

- It has been estimated that the world's annual consumption of plastic shopping bags has reached in excess of 500 billion bags.
- The Wall Street Journal has estimated that the USA consumes 100 billion plastic bags annually, which requires **12 million barrels of oil** to manufacturing.
- Plastic never fully decomposes. Over time it goes through a process of photo-degradation, and merely breaks down into smaller and smaller pieces.
- These substances cannot be converted by any known organisms, and as such remain as plastic in landfills, rivers, and oceans.
- In a 1998 survey of the North Pacific Ocean, 89% of waste observed was plastic products.
- It is estimated that 53% of plastic shopping bags are distributed into circulation via supermarkets and grocery stores.
- Sea turtles, whales and dolphins are among sea animals being directly affected by plastic waste products, often mistaking plastic bags for food, causing slow and painful deaths to these animals over a prolonged period of time.

### **Think paper bags are better? Think again!**

- As waste, paper bags produce 70 times more air pollutants than plastic bags.
- Annually, 14 million trees are felled to produce paper bags, trees that could be cleaning the air we breathe and cooling the planet we live on.
- Paper bags consume 40% more energy to produce than plastic bags.
- Paper bags generate 80% more solid waste than paper bags.
- As waste, paper bags produce 50 times more water pollutants than plastic bags.

So the next time you go to the grocery store and you are asked "Paper or plastic?" tell them "Neither!" as you whip out your reusable canvas bag...

**It's the environmentally responsible thing to do!**

Information provided by cleangreenbags.com. Brought to you by the Village of Ocean Beach Environmental Commission.