

Environmental Resources Planning, LLC

Innovative Solutions to Environmental Challenges

Ocean Conservancy ICC Data - Plastic Grocery Bags in Beach Litter

In 1986, Ocean Conservancy began their International Coastal Cleanup (ICC), a coordinated effort to characterize beach litter collected worldwide. In 2008, ICC began tallying plastic grocery bags (PG Bags) separately by state. The most recent ICC data comparing PG Bags to all litter tallied is shown below. Note that some states did not report data for a given year. Data for 2015 is not included because PG Bags were not in the top ten littered items that year. Thus, the data was not in that year's report.

Nationwide, PG Bags were 1.9 percent of beach litter collected in 2014 and 2016. A number of other items were more prevalent in beach litter. These included food wrappers (7.4 percent), plastic bottle caps (6.3 percent), plastic beverage bottles (4.9 percent), metal beverage cans (3.0 percent), metal beverage caps (2.4 percent) and glass beverage bottles (2.4 percent). Other items not part of the top ten for those years comprised 43.5 percent of beach litter. Those included balloons, rope, food bottles, fishing line, straps, nets, gloves, floats, buoys, tampon applicators, light bulbs, light sticks and syringes.

State	2016 Data			2014 Data		
	All Items	PG Bags	% PGB	All Items	PG Bags	% PGB
Alabama	117,405	2,570	2.19%	204,885	4,056	1.98%
Alaska	13,783	130	0.94%	11,386	312	2.74%
Arizona	1,924	122	6.34%	2,948	173	5.87%
Arkansas	7,953	330	4.15%	2,971	50	1.68%
California	767,990	13,361	1.74%	1,261,501	22,346	1.77%
Colorado	449	2	0.45%	-	-	0.00%
Connecticut	7,101	194	2.73%	83,963	1,983	2.36%
Delaware	57,083	1,014	1.78%	69,872	1,194	1.71%
D.C.	10,848	389	3.59%	10,471	241	2.30%
Florida	977,096	20,403	2.09%	715,009	10,093	1.41%
Georgia	74,353	11	0.01%	110,016	4,253	3.87%
Hawaii	108,765	723	0.66%	232,650	2,105	0.90%
Idaho	309	4	1.29%	134	2	1.49%
Illinois	78,164	638	0.82%	94,984	1,222	1.29%
Indiana	28,122	146	0.52%	34,067	504	1.48%
Iowa	8	1	12.50%	-	-	0.00%
Kansas	2,808	30	1.07%	2,292	213	9.29%
Louisiana	42,329	806	1.90%	51,006	944	1.85%
Maine	72,182	721	1.00%	33,144	282	0.85%
Maryland	78,859	2,608	3.31%	132,785	3,097	2.33%
Massachusetts	147,654	1,813	1.23%	128,284	1,648	1.28%
Michigan	112,050	450	0.40%	100,249	879	0.88%
Minnesota	11,310	58	0.51%	4,387	91	2.07%
Mississippi	129,570	4,691	3.62%	-	-	0.00%
Missouri	8,447	276	3.27%	2,648	162	6.12%
Nebraska	27,674	480	1.73%	14,569	617	4.24%
Nevada	-	-	0.00%	3,472	201	5.79%
New Hampshire	45,228	156	0.34%	45,503	165	0.36%
New Jersey	89,642	2,410	2.69%	103,367	2,340	2.26%
New York	302,773	8,082	2.67%	317,882	7,506	2.36%
North Carolina	80,964	1,238	1.53%	102,850	2,427	2.36%
Ohio	69,244	1,949	2.81%	78,508	2,272	2.89%
Oklahoma	2,678	44	1.64%	-	-	0.00%
Oregon	17,074	334	1.96%	22,642	222	0.98%
Pennsylvania	88,125	1,879	2.13%	111,304	2,440	2.19%
Rhode Island	153,090	2,339	1.53%	157,579	2,151	1.37%
South Carolina	119,619	1,954	1.63%	103,005	1,518	1.47%
South Dakota	-	-	0.00%	240	3	1.25%
Texas	147,254	3,561	2.42%	313,689	5,710	1.82%
Utah	401	8	2.00%	868	19	2.19%
Vermont	1,074	9	0.84%	2,890	17	0.59%
Virginia	163,013	7,725	4.74%	169,559	6,609	3.90%
Washington	51,551	482	0.93%	42,146	337	0.80%
Wisconsin	38,337	440	1.15%	45,095	386	0.86%
Other	28,686	498	1.74%	-	-	0.00%
Totals	4,282,989	85,079	1.99%	4,924,820	90,790	1.84%