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Plastics Industry Influenced CA School Curriculum

New information has emerged regarding how a pro-plastic lobbying group may have influenced the environmental curriculum in California schools. According to California Watch, the American Chemistry Council was able to [edit textbooks](#) to include positive, misleading information about plastic bags.

From California Watch:

The rewritten textbooks and teachers' guides coincided with a [public relations and lobbying effort](#) by the chemistry council to fight proposed plastic bag bans throughout the country...

In 2009, a private consultant hired by California school officials added [a new section](#) to the 11th-grade teachers' edition textbook called "The Advantages of Plastic Shopping Bags." The title and some of the textbook language were inserted almost verbatim from letters written by the chemistry council.

A five-point question was also added to the textbook, which asked students how plastic bags were advantageous to consumers.



It's well known that plastic bags are extremely harmful to the environment. They aren't biodegradable, and threaten wildlife both on land and in water.

According to [Love Your Earth](#), around one billion animals die yearly as a result of eating plastic bags (and it's a horrible, painful death as well - the animals choke on the plastic).

California senator Fran Pavley, who authored legislation in 2003 that mandated environmental topics be included in school curriculums, had [harsh words](#) for the American Chemistry Council. "The American Chemistry Council obviously got engaged to protect their bottom line," she said. And they have good reason for wanting to send a pro-plastic message out in light of new California legislation that has [banned the use of plastic bags](#) in several cities.

Hopefully, the misleading information will be edited out of the curriculum, which is currently being tested in 20 California schools districts.

Photo via Flickr user [FeatheredTar](#)

by Karina Grudnikov

Sunday, August 21st, 2011 at 17:57

Tags: [american chemistry council](#), [environmental education](#), [plastic bags](#)

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Ray S

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Aug 22nd, 2011 at 08:03 | [#1](#)

Pennsylvania is in the same process of teaching how great drilling for gas in the Marcellus shale is. Many universities are offering training on how to drill and some schools have considered allowing drilling on school properties. All this despite constant stories of drilling mud and surfactant spills into streams, contaminated wells and horrible scars left in "our" state forests from exploration and extraction. Somebody is being paid off somewhere, it is just a matter of time before the corruption is brought to light. "There's a hundred years of energy in the shale beneath your feet" - then what? And at what cost to the landscape???

•

Bernie Masters

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Aug 31st, 2011 at 19:19 | [#2](#)

Garbage! It is totally inaccurate to blame plastic bags for all plastic-related animal deaths. And no scientific study has verified the accuracy of the claim that one billion animals a year die from plastic ingestion. The environmental movement has focused on disposable plastic bags because they are an easy target, not because they are as serious an environmental threat as some people claim.

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jbabe

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Sep 6th, 2011 at 16:58 | [#3](#)

[@Bernie Masters](#)

Well Bernie what do you say are the three biggest environmental threats?

•

Shankar

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Sep 9th, 2011 at 07:07 | [#4](#)

Plastics have become the punching bag of all. The problem is not in plastics but in their usage, disposal and recycling. Use of plastics in automobiles have made them more fuel efficient by reducing their weight. Plastics directly contributed to the improvement in electrical and electronics by innovative application of plastics in insulation. Prior to plastics insulation was mainly by using rubber which was leading to more serious problems, in usage, accidents, handling and application. By and large plastics have been beneficial. But over the time, the careless dumping of used plastics in the environment is causing the so called ill effects of plastics.

Marine lives get choked on plastics because people throw the plastics in water instead of disposing of safely. Practically all plastics are recyclable, but it could be an added cost, which the users must bear as part of the overall cost.

Plastics do not cause more environmental damage in production than paper, metal or wood industries.

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Sep 11th, 2011 at 10:08 | [#5](#)

The point isn't if plastics are or are not the issue- the point is that a lobbying effort has been successful in influencing educational material and curriculum. The fact that this sort of thing can happen is the real issue.

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