ping a bag when they can. That means less waste and less litter. For our children to inherit a less polluted earth, that’s exactly what we need.”

What’s the problem with plastic bags?

In the U.S., we generate 35 million tons of plastic waste each and every year.

We didn’t ask for all this plastic waste, but we can’t avoid it. If you’ve ever tried to go shopping without bringing home a big pile of unnecessary packaging, or if you’ve done any online shopping, you know how hard it is to avoid wasteful plastic.

When it comes to single-use plastic bags, most of those bags are used briefly then discarded, with an average life span of 12 minutes.

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But not all bag bans are equally effective

Well-designed plastic bag bans encourage a shift toward truly sustainable options such as reusable bags, but not all plastic bag bans are created equal.

Some cities and states have adopted policies that deliver reductions in overall plastic bag use but also contain loopholes that allow for the continued use of some types of plastic bags, or that fail to discourage consumers from shifting to single-use paper bags. Even bans with loopholes have driven significant reductions in the number of plastic bags used overall, and in the amount of plastic bag litter found in coastal areas.

To reduce the plastic pollution that threatens our health and our environment, policymakers should adopt a strong statewide ban on single-use plastic bags to minimize plastic waste and should close loopholes that weaken or counteract the effectiveness of existing bans.

NEWS BRIEFS

FOOD AND FARMING

MASSPIRG and Clean Water Action collaborate to reduce food waste

Two of Massachusetts’ leading advocacy groups, MASSPIRG and Clean Water Action, are joining forces to launch a new campaign to reduce food waste. The campaign will focus on the environmental and public health benefits of right-sizing our food production and portions.

We’ve already taken steps toward reducing food waste. A memo from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) reported that Massachusetts has made progress in recent years on diverting food waste from landfills and incinerators.

Our goal is to meet DEP’s 2030 goals for food waste reduction. To meet them, MASSPIRG Executive Director Janet Domenitz and Clean Water Action Director Cindy Luppi advocate, “Let’s double down on our efforts to divert food from landfills and incinerators, and ask our decision-makers to build the infrastructure needed to compost and reuse food scraps in a sustainable manner.”
CONSUMER PROTECTION

MASSPIRG pushes for protections from junk fees

Have you ever felt prepared to make a purchase, then been surprised by a bunch of extra “junk fees” when you’re finally ready to pay? MASSPIRG is calling for the regulation of these hidden fees.

MASSPIRG’s Legislative Director Deirdre Cummings testified in December before the office of the Attorney General in support of Attorney General Andrea Campbell’s proposed regulations cracking down on hidden “junk fees” by stopping deceptive advertising.

The proposed rules seek to require upfront total pricing, require disclosure about the nature and purpose of fees and taxes, and make it easier for consumers to cancel trial offers and renewal fees.

“Comparable, complete, and timely price information allows consumers to make the right personal choices for their pocket books while also leading to a more competitive marketplace,” said Deirdre.

MASSPIRG will continue to support the implementation of appropriate regulations to protect Baystaters like you from junk fees.

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Meta should protect kids’ safety in Quest virtual reality

Has a kid in your life been begging you for a virtual reality headset? They can be pretty fun, but before you go out and buy one, there are a few things you need to know.

Meta recently lowered the recommended minimum age for its VR headsets, allowing children ages 10 to 12 to have accounts.

Our research partners at U.S. PIRG Education Fund tested Meta’s newest headset, the Quest 3, and warns that it may be unsafe for kids.

Even with increased parental controls, the Quest virtual reality headset could potentially expose young users to inappropriate content, health risks and threats to their privacy.

“Meta says it’s committed to creating safe and positive experiences on Quest. Our testing found real problems remain,” said R.J. Cross, director of U.S. PIRG Education Fund’s Don’t Sell My Data campaign. “Meta’s current efforts are not enough to guarantee a healthy experience for children.”

MASSPIRG and our national network are urging Meta not to market its VR headsets to children and teens under 18 unless and until they’re proven safe. Visit our website to add your name to our petition to Meta today.

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Support our work in the public interest by including a gift to MASSPIRG or MASSPIRG Education Fund in your will, trust or retirement accounts.

For more information call 1-800-841-7299 or send an email to: plannedgiving@masspirg.org
“Last month my wife’s Apple iPad fell off the table and the glass screen shattered. So, after several inquiries it turns out the iPad cannot be opened for repair since Apple glues it shut so tightly that opening it would totally destroy it. This is a $500 device with a delicate screen that cannot be repaired. Totally unacceptable.”

— John Shelton, Massachusetts

On Feb. 6, MASSPIRG Education Fund released the third annual version of the “Failing the Fix” scorecard. Companies that design their devices to last receive a good grade, and those “failing the fix” receive poor grades.

Google’s Chromebooks, one of the more affordable options on the market, continue to be less repairable than other laptops.

Apple continues to be in last place for laptop repairs, but showed considerable improvement in their cell phone score, rising more than any other company.

Unfixable products have become a pressing issue for consumers and the environment alike. In Massachusetts alone, consumers generate 159,000 tons of e-waste each year.

“Consumers pay good money for devices, they deserve ones that will last,” said Janet Domenitz, executive director of MASSPIRG. “People want to buy from companies that respect our right to repair and ensure that their devices are designed to last.”