

Extended producer responsibility more important than banning plastic bags: Jardine

Islanders gradually moving towards cloth bags for shopping

By Leslie Keeping

From an environmental perspective, plastic bags aren't

that harmful, the director of pollution prevention for the Department of Environment, Energy, and Forestry says. Don Jardine said although

plastic bags are harmful, they can be recycled, unlike many packaged products with mixed plastics. "Plastic bags are just the tip

of the iceberg."

Islanders are already taking action to limit the number of plastic bags.

Sharon Labchuk, leader of P.E.I.'s Green party, said she's amazed at the number of people she sees using cloth bags in grocery stores.

"It is improving, I've noticed an improvement in the last six months."

But she says there's still lots of room for improvement though, and says people's good intentions aren't enough.

"I think the province should ban them."

Jardine said the bigger problem lies with packaging in products, he said it should be up to the producer of the products to take responsibility for it.

The Canadian Wireless Technology Association is already taking action to deal with the trash their products produce.

It describes itself as an authority on wireless issues, developments and trends in Canada.

On Jan. 20, the CWTA announced it was launching the Recycle My Cell program, a free program organized by the association and other cellphone providers to allow people to easily recycle old cellphones.

Initiatives like this need to be taken by other producers to deal with the trash their products produce, Jardine said.

"That's an organization that takes responsibility for its product."

There are plenty of programs in place to deal with plastic bags, but there is no legislation in place to ban them, or charge consumers for using them, he said.

However, he suspects P.E.I. will see a law passed on plastic bags within the next year.

Keeping is a journalism student at Holland College



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