KATMANDUPOST GOVERNMENT TOUGHENS BAN ON PLASTIC BAGS

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Maybe try a carrot!

The reason it is so difficult to enforce a plastic bag ban is simple. There is nothing to replace plastic bags that is as flexible, strong, lightweight, waterproof and cheap when it comes to protecting food and other goods from damage and contamination and carrying things home from the shops.

Paper bags are more expensive, worse for the environment and fall apart when wet. Long-life/cloth re-usable bags are very rarely cleaned, often harboring dangerous germs such as E-coli and Salmonella, all of which makes replacing plastic bags more of a challenge.

But it needn't be, because plastic bags can be made with smart oxo-biodegradable plastic technology. It performs in exactly the same way as conventional plastic, but if the bag or packaging escapes collection/recycling and gets into the open environment it will not lie or float around for decades causing a visual intrusion, blocking water courses and endangering wildlife.

With oxo-biodegradable technology the life of the bag or packaging can be determined at manufacture (typically 12 – 24 months) after which the item will degrade and biodegrade in the open environment (on land or sea) in months rather than decades. It will degrade in the same way as a leaf only quicker and there are no toxic residues or fragments of plastic.

The Oxo-biodegradable Plastics Association (OPA) has worked with Eunomia Consultants and the European Commission, and has provided a 459-page dossier proving that Oxo-biodegradable Plastics (OBP) do rapidly convert into biodegradable materials in the open environment; that the material is then consumed by micro-organisms on land and sea; that the material contains no metals in excess of permitted levels, and that there is no eco-toxicity.

The dossier also contains proof that, if collected during its useful life, OBP can be safely recycled with ordinary plastics without the need for separation.

For more detail on why OBP is the right technology for dealing with microplastics (and why "bioplastics" are not) see www.biodeg.org