

Preserving the environment through integrated recovery and disposal.

October 10, 2017

**PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Emily Albright, Director of Recycling (315) 733-1224 Ext. 1600

**Solid Waste Authority Announces 2017 Plastic Film Recycling Challenge for Schools**

The Plastic Film Recycling Challenge for schools is sponsored by the Oneida-Herkimer Solid Waste Authority and Trex Company in an effort to promote and educate youth and the community on proper recycling of plastic grocery bags and other plastic film, **which cannot be recycled through regular curbside recycling programs**. The initiative focuses on collecting clean, dry, plastic film in order to keep it out of our region's landfill.

In 2009, New York State's Plastic Bag Reduction, Reuse and Recycling Act went into effect. The law states that stores with 10,000 square feet or more of retail space and chains which operate five or more stores with greater than 5,000 square feet of retail space, and which provide plastic carry out bags to customers, are required to establish an in-store film plastic recycling program and ensure that collected film plastics are recycled.

In 2013, nearly 4 million plastic bags, sacks and wraps were generated in the United States. Of that amount, less than 15% were recovered for recycling. Because curbside recycling programs do not accept plastic film for recycling, the Authority's goal for this Challenge is to not only increase student awareness and involvement, but encourage the community to take action and save plastic film to be delivered to local grocery stores for proper recycling.

In 2016, twelve local schools participated in the Authority's Plastic Film Recycling Challenge. Over the six weeks of the Challenge, these schools collected almost 3,000 pounds of plastic film – that is the equivalent of recycling almost 200,000 plastic grocery bags.

"When residents place plastic film in their recycling bin, it contaminates acceptable recyclables and causes mechanical problems at the Recycling Center," stated Authority Director of Recycling Emily Albright. "We encourage residents to utilize the plastic film recycling programs provided by retailers across the region," she continued.

The following items **cannot be placed in your curbside recycling bin**, but can be recycled at local grocery stores and through the Plastic Film Recycling Challenge:

- Grocery Bags
- Bread Bags
- Case Overwrap
- Dry Cleaning Bags
- Newspaper Sleeves
- Ice Bags
- Wood Pellet Bags
- Ziploc and other Reclosable Bags
- Produce Bags
- Bubble Wrap
- Salt Bags
- Cereal Bags

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The Plastic Film Recycling Challenge is open to all public and private K-12 school buildings located in Oneida or Herkimer Counties. The entire school building must participate in the Challenge. Schools will be divided into two categories: Elementary School and Middle/High School.

“The Authority encourages schools to join the Plastic Film Recycling Challenge to help increase community awareness on proper recycling of plastic film” continued Albright. “We are asking local schools in the Oneida-Herkimer region to take action to collect plastic film for proper recycling. This will allow it to be recovered for recycling into brand new items and divert it from being sent to the Regional Landfill.”

The Authority’s Plastic Film Recycling Challenge will take place from November 15, 2017 (America Recycles Day) to December 22, 2017. **The deadline for registration is November 1, 2017.**

Schools will compete against each other to collect the highest amount of plastic film per capita. A school volunteer will weigh and record the amount of plastic film collected each week. The school volunteer will also deliver the collected plastic film to a participating retailer (a list of participating retailers will be provided).

One school building from each category will win the grand prize. All participating schools will receive a framed certificate for participating. The winning Elementary School will be awarded presentations from the Utica “Zoomobile.” The winning Middle/High School will be awarded appearances from KISS FM DJs.

For more information about the Authority’s *Go Green Recycling Program* or to register for the Plastic Film Recycling Challenge, please contact Emily Albright, Director of Recycling, at (315) 733-1224 ext. 1600 or via email at [emilya@ohswa.org](mailto:emilya@ohswa.org). Plastic Film Recycling Challenge Rules and Information can be viewed on the Authority’s website at [www.ohswa.org](http://www.ohswa.org).

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