

# Strategies for combatting contamination at ecomaine

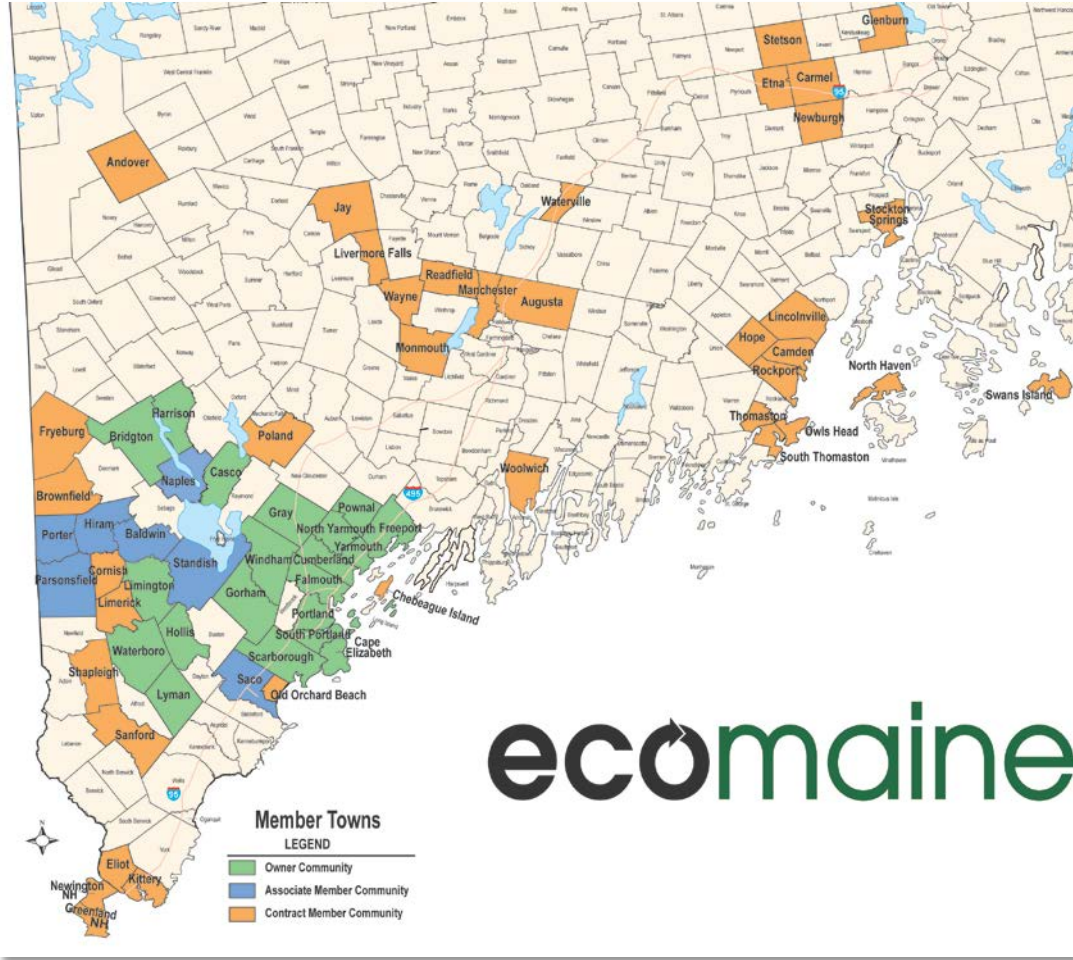


ecomaine consistently achieves an industry-leading 7% contamination on recycling.

Here's how.

Lisa Wolff, Communications Manager

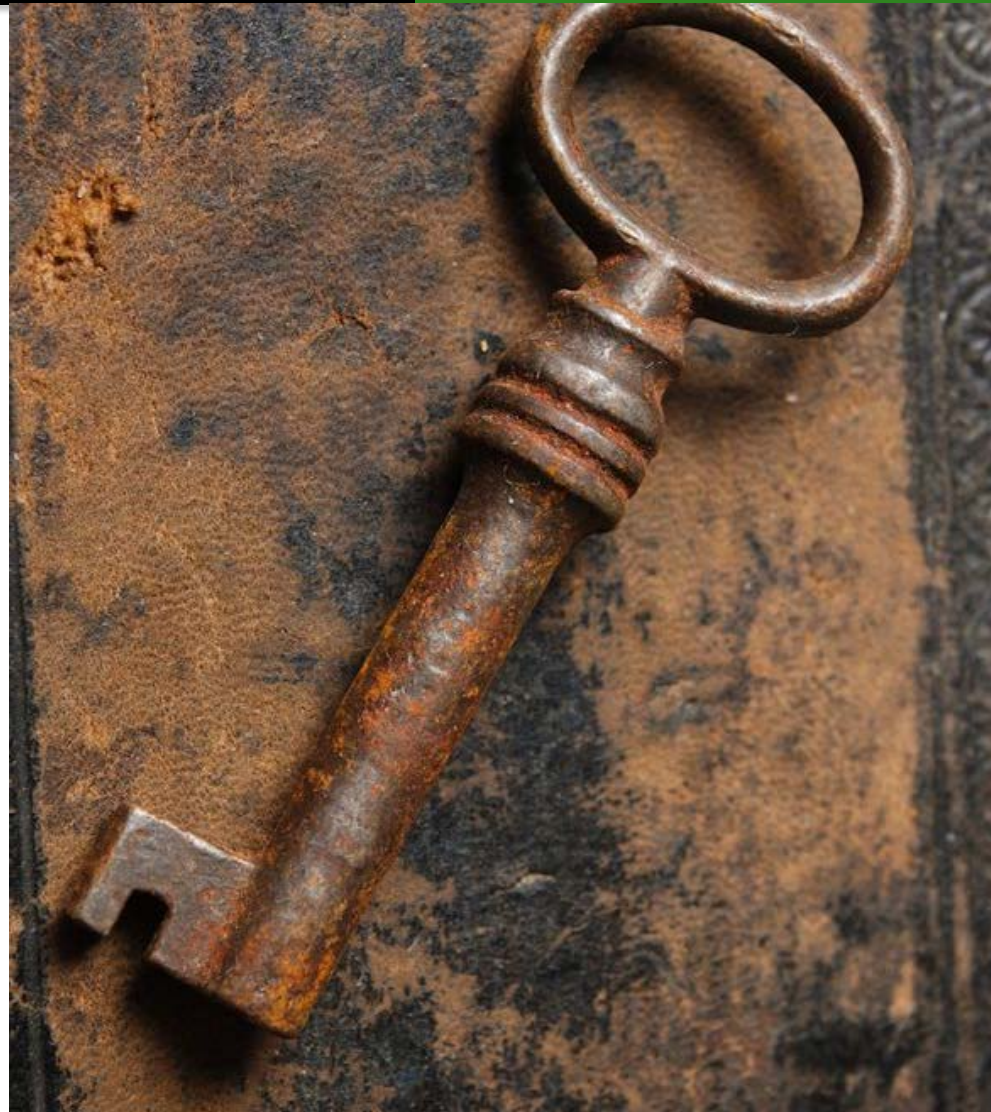
# Who is ecomaine?



Handling one-third of Maine's recycling and waste, operating a single-sort recycling facility and waste-to-energy power plant in Portland.

# Key to contamination success

1. **Transparency** of the technology – opening our doors through tours
2. **Story-telling** – explaining the “why” behind the DOs and DON'Ts
1. **Printed reinforcement** (visual and written)



# Transparency through tours

- ecomaine has full-time environmental educator
- Tours five days a week
- Annual Open House
- Tacit understanding of “the why”



# “Be a superstar - recycle right”



# Storytelling: case study

- Plastic bags are one of our top contaminants
- Last fall, we decided to stop taking them
- Led with “the why” and suggested other options

NEWS Posted November 28, 2016 | Updated November 28, 2016

INCREASE FONT SIZE

## Ecomaine asks Waterville residents to stop putting recyclables in plastic bags

The recycler says the bags are clogging its sorting machines and wants to encourage people to use reusable bags.

BY AMY CALDER MORNING SENTINEL

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WATERVILLE — City residents are being asked to stop using plastic retail and grocery bags for recyclables that are picked up in curbside bins, a move that company disposing of the materials says will help its operations.

Ecomaine says it will no longer accept the bags because they clog up the so machines at ecomaine's recycling facility in Portland, forcing workers to st process several times a day to unclog them. Also, the market for selling the very weak and ecomaine wants to encourage people to avoid using plastic l instead use reusable bags, said Lisa Wolff, ecomaine's communications m



Machinery problems and a weak market for plastic bags has prompted Ecomaine to ask Waterville residents to stop putting recyclables in plastic bags. Courtesy of Brian Fitzgerald

“It's been that way for quite a long time,” V said Monday of the clogging problem, “but unfortunately, there's just more and more bag usage and more and more clogging.”

Ecomaine had been accepting the plastic b the numbers 2 and 4 on the bottom — prin grocery and retail plastic bags — but peopl were putting wood pellet and feed bags tha those numbers on them into their recyclab such bags are not recoverable, Wolff said.

Many supermarkets and other stores will a plastic retail and grocery bags at recycling s



Sorting machinery is seen in operation at ecomaine, which is the company Waterville contracts with to dispose of its recyclables. The company says it will no longer accept plastic retail and grocery bags because the items clog up the sorting machines at its recycling facility in Portland. Contributed photo by Brian Fitzgerald

# Visual storytelling: social media



**Ecomaine**  
Published by Katrina Venhuizen [?] · January 11 ·

Look who I found wandering around the #ecomaine parking lot today. This little #green guy must have fallen off a #truck ok its way to our #wastetoenergy tipping floor.

Don't forget the #wastehierarchy and #reuse what you can be in a #trashcan. If you want to get rid of old toys, books, clothing, etc, can you give them to Goodwill Industries of Northern New England, The Salvation Army, Portland ME ?

#greenball #losttoy #payitforward



**Ecomaine at Ecomaine.**  
July 18, 2016 · Portland ·

On this morning's tour at our #recycling facility, we discovered that propane tanks that our staff manually pulled out of trucks pose serious fire hazards to our employees. DON'T put them in your recycling bin! They are a fire hazard and must be taken to a propane transfer station. PLEASE SHARE and learn more at <http://www.ecomaine.org/recycling-and-wa.../single-sort-guide/>



**Ecomaine**  
Published by Katrina Venhuizen [?] · December 21, 2016 ·

Word to the wise #maine #recycler, giant #hexagon pipe is not #recyclable at #ecomaine. This big piece almost stopped progress for the day!



**Ecomaine**  
Published by Lisa Wolff [?] · December 19, 2016 ·

Will it recycle? Ever since we announced that we're no longer accepting plastic shopping bags in your single-sort recycling bin, we've been getting a common question about whether or not shredded paper can still be recycled in a clear plastic bag. The answer is YES! This is the one exception to the rule because our hand sorters are able to easily spot the shredded paper through the clear plastic and can add it in at the very end of the sorting process to ensure the little bits of paper don't fall through our mechanical sorters. Do you have an item you're unsure about placing in your recycling bin? Use our "Will it Recycle?" form and our experts will send you a personalized response. <http://www.ecomaine.org/recycling-and-w.../single-sort-guide/>



# Reinforcements in print

## ecomaine Recycling Guidelines

### DO RECYCLE

glass metal and cans plastics #1 - 7

cardboard and cartons paper and newspaper

QUESTIONS? Call 207-773-1738 or visit [ecomaine.org](http://ecomaine.org)

### DON'T RECYCLE

wood and yard clippings foam plastic bags and wrap

food contained sharps diapers and pet litter

compost (if available) waste-to-energy

### DO Recycle

**Paper, Plastic, Metal & Glass can all be mixed together.**

**PAPER**

- All Clean Cardboard, Paperboard & Pizza Boxes
- Newspapers & Inserts
- Magazines
- Mail & Catalogs
- Paper Bags
- Office Paper & Envelopes
- Wrapping Paper
- Phone Books
- Books
- Paper Plates (clean)
- Milk & Juice Cartons
- Drink Boxes & Aseptic Containers
- Shredded Paper (put in clear bags)

**PLASTIC**

- Water Bottles
- Milk Jugs
- Detergent Bottles
- All rigid containers marked with a #1-#7 (except Styrofoam)

**METAL**

- Tin Cans
- Aerosol Cans (empty)
- Aluminum Cans/Foil
- Pots & Pans

**GLASS (all colors)**

All glass Bottles & Jars

*All containers must be EMPTY (but not perfectly clean) and smaller than 5 gallons in size.*

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### Don't Recycle

**Please keep these items out:**

Trash/Garbage  
Needles & Sharps  
No Large metal parts car, boat, truck, etc.  
Wood/lumber  
Propane, helium or other gas cylinders  
Pipes, plastic or metal  
**Clothing & shoes**  
**Plastic bags:**

- trash/shopping bags
- frozen vegetable
- pellet bags
- bread bags
- newspaper bags
- potato or snack
- sandwich
- animal food bags

**Plastic wrap or film**  
**Bedding & Pillows**  
**Garden hoses**  
**Batteries:**

- alkaline
- button-cell
- rechargeable

Boat shrink-wrap/tarps  
Bubble-wrap  
Diapers (baby/adult)  
Envelopes that are plastic or Tyvek®  
Food or plants (compost)  
Kitty litter  
Knives & Blades  
Light bulbs (any type; return CFLs to store)  
Paper napkin & towels  
Styrofoam® or polystyrene foam (even if #6)  
Toys  
Vinyl siding  
Waxed paper / boxes  
Rope, String, Chain

**More** →

Learn more at [ecomaine.org](http://ecomaine.org) or 207-773-1738

### Know Which Plastics to Recycle

With the exception of polystyrene (Styrofoam), your plastic is recyclable if the answer to all three of these questions is **YES**:

- Does it have a number (1-7) in the middle of the chasing arrow symbol?
- Is it rigid or hard?
- Is it a container?

Many supermarkets & retail stores accept plastic bags and film for recycling. Find drop-off locations at [plasticfilmrecycling.org](http://plasticfilmrecycling.org).

**No hazardous waste – ever!**

The following items, categorized as "hazardous waste" must be disposed of carefully and cannot be included with your trash or with single-sort recycling:

- Ammunition
- Anti-freeze
- Button-cell batteries
- CFL light bulbs (compact fluorescent)
- Chemicals
- Computers & related parts
- Fertilizers
- Fluorescent bulbs (of any kind)
- Fuel (gasoline, diesel, kerosene)
- Mercury (in any amount)
- Oxygen tanks
- Paint thinner
- Pesticides
- Propane tanks
- Rechargeable batteries
- TVs

### RECYCLE

PUT RECYCLABLES IN THE RECYCLING BIN

glass metal and cans plastics #1 - 7

cardboard and cartons paper and newspaper

**ecomaine**

[ecomaine.org](http://ecomaine.org) | 207-773-1738

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### Recycle Right for the Holidays

WILL IT RECYCLE?

**Naughty (Don't Recycle)**

- ✗ Bows & ribbon
- ✗ Wrapping paper that doesn't rip
- ✗ Christmas tree lights
- ✗ Foil caked in food residue
- ✗ Plastic cutlery

*\*Reuse, donate or place in the trash*

**Nice (Recycle)**

- ✓ Wrapping paper that rips
- ✓ Holiday cards
- ✓ Aluminum pans and foil with minimal food residue
- ✓ Cardboard and gift boxes
- ✓ Cookie tins (if they can't be reused)

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### TRASH

PUT NON-RECYCLABLES IN YOUR TRASH OR COMPOST

film plastic (plastic wrap, bags, bubble wrap, etc.) yard clippings (if not composting)

dirty diapers or cat litter foam food (if not composting)

waste-to-energy

Learn more at [ecomaine.org](http://ecomaine.org) or 207-773-1738

Magnets

Do/DON'T cards – front & back

Cards/ Posters



# Measurement

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- Recycling residue rates (contamination)
- Website traffic
- Social media views and shares
- Mail chimp email opens
- Track tours, presentations & events
- Earned media

# What's next at ecomaine?

- Food waste recycling
- Searchable waste wizard

ecomaine

Feed ME food scraps!

ecomaine.org

YES



NO

- |                                   |                         |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| ✓ bread, pasta, rice, grains      | * baby & hand wipes     |
| ✓ coffee grounds & filters        | * cat litter            |
| ✓ compostable serveware           | * diapers               |
| ✓ dairy products                  | * glass                 |
| ✓ eggshells, seashells & bones    | * medicines             |
| ✓ fats, oils, greases             | * pet waste             |
| ✓ fruit & veggie scraps           | * polystyrene/styrofoam |
| ✓ meat & fish scraps              | * rubber bands          |
| ✓ paper napkins & wooden stirrers | * yard waste            |
| ✓ tea bags                        |                         |

This list pertains to ecomaine community food waste recycling programs.

# Keep in touch!

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