

Swiss Plastics Association defends plastic bags

Dr. Ernesto Engel, director of the Swiss Plastics Association, speaks out on WRS World Radio against plastics bags ban motion.



The director of the Swiss Plastics Association Dr. Ernesto Engel recently spoke out on WRS World Radio when he supported the use of plastic bags following a motion made by an MP for their ban in Switzerland.

Swiss MP Mr. Daburman called for a national ban on plastic bags shortly after parliamentary approval of their ban in Canton Jura, a rural area in the north west of the country, and follow in the footsteps of countries such as China, Australia and France.

Dr. Ernesto spoke during prime time and said: “I am against the ban because the arguments brought forward are either wrong or not appropriate for the situation in Switzerland.”

Dr. Ernesto had three main arguments opposing the MP’s views. He challenged conceptions about society’s use of plastic bags, energy recovery from incineration as opposed to landfill, and the ecological impact of modern popular alternatives to the plastic bag.

“Plastic bags cannot be reused? Plastics bags are indeed reused on a regular basis. I’m pretty sure that most of us keep plastic bags stowed somewhere in their kitchen to reuse them for various purposes such as our next shopping tour or to pack the picnic in the rucksack when we go hiking,” he said.

Dr. Ernesto opposed arguments about plastic bags ending up in landfill by stating the fact that Switzerland does not have landfill as it incinerates all of its waste to produce energy. “By replacing oil and gas and generating energy and heat you have an energy recovery.”

His final point concerning the use of alternatives to plastic bags discussed the use of lifecycle analysis to fully understand a product’s ecological impact: an area that PlasticsEurope is pioneering:

“Lifecycle analysis such as the one carried out by EMPAR are a valuable tool to make a sound evaluation and this particular study points out that the ecological impact of bags is largely determined by the resources required to produce the bags. The production of fabric bags requires a lot more resources to produce than a plastic bag.”