

Dividing plastic's parts

A Vancouver company's proprietary chemical additives can break down plastic bags and packaging in mere months

BY CURT CHEREWAYKO

It's not often that you hear the term "environmentally friendly" used as a description for plastic, but a Vancouver company has been making the closest thing to environmentally friendly plastic for 17 years.

EPI Environmental Technologies develops chemical additives that, when incorporated into plastic in the manufacturing stage, accelerate its degradation.

According to Joseph Gho, EPI's chairman & CEO, creating biodegradable plastics is a more effective and practical way to manage plastic waste than banning certain plastic products.

He referenced a motion in January made by Vancouver councillor Tim Stevenson to phase out the use of plastic bags in Metro Vancouver's 22 municipalities.

"The reason why plastic is so popular is because it is so inexpensive, it can come in different shapes and different sizes and different strengths," said Gho.

Strength and durability, however, become detriments when it is time to dispose of plastic. That's when EPI's totally degradable plastic additives, or TPDAs, enter the picture.

Mainly used in grocery packaging and shopping bags, TPDAs cause plastic to degrade when it's exposed to sunlight, heat or mechanical stress – in a landfill, for example.



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Joseph Gho, chair and CEO of EPI Environmental Technologies: creating biodegradable plastic is a more effective way to manage plastic waste

