

April 16, 2008

PLASTIC BAG NEWS ARTICLES

The following are a sampling of recent news articles regarding plastic bags that may be of interest to stakeholders.

Lawmaker urges 25-cent fee for plastic grocery bags

By Troy Anderson, Staff Writer LA Daily News

Article Last Updated: 04/10/2008 10:13:52 PM PDT

California would have the nation's toughest plastic-bag law - requiring all large grocery stores and pharmacies to charge customers 25cents per bag - under a bill sponsored and endorsed Thursday by Los Angeles County government.

AB 2829, authored by Assemblyman Mike Davis, D-Los Angeles, would mark the most aggressive action by any state to curb the use of plastic bags and limit their impact on the ocean, wildlife and environment.

"This statewide fee would be the toughest statewide policy we've seen to date," said Kirsten James, water quality director at Heal the Bay. "We've seen a lot of momentum on plastic bags. Communities are starting to realize it is a big problem. Economically, cities are spending millions of dollars to clean up litter such as plastic bags."

The bill would amend a state law, AB 2449, that currently forbids cities and counties from imposing fees for carryout bags. The money raised by the fee would be used by local governments for litter prevention and reduction efforts.

But Keith Christman, senior director of packaging for Progressive Bag Affiliates of the American Chemistry Council, said state lawmakers should wait to see how the current state law - which calls for plastic-bag recycling - works out before passing another bill.

"I don't think the public will pay 25 cents a bag," Christman said. "Grocery stores will start handing out paper bags. They will go back to paper bags. Paper bags require 40 (percent to) 70 percent more energy, double greenhouse-gas emissions, increase waste by 80 percent and dramatically increase water use."

The Assembly Natural Resource Committee will vote Monday on the bill.

The bill comes as environmental groups have argued that plastic bags endanger wildlife, pollute waterways, exacerbate neighborhood blight and generate thousands of tons of unnecessary waste.

In January, the Board of Supervisors voted to require large grocery stores and retail stores in unincorporated areas to significantly reduce the use of plastic bags or face a ban in 2013.

But after the supervisors approved the plan, some board members expressed concern about how many businesses in unincorporated areas would actually be affected and directed officials to draft a list.

County officials plan to present the list to the supervisors in June. "The distribution of plastic bags has created a hidden cost on residents," Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke said. "They not only pay for plastic bags in the price of their commodities, but their tax dollars fund litter-prevention and -abatement efforts.

"It's our poorest communities that are most negatively impacted by the high amount of plastic-bag blight." Each year, Californians use more than 19billion plastic bags, including 6billion in Los Angeles County.

Taxpayers spend more than \$25 million to collect and dispose of them. While the bags are recyclable, less than 5percent are actually recycled. Most end up in landfills, clogging waterways or blowing in the streets.

State legislation passed last year requires retailers to sell reusable totes at store entrances to encourage people to reduce the use of both plastic and paper bags.

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Azusa to curb bag use

By Bethania Palma, Staff Writer

Article Launched: 04/08/2008 11:19:15 PM PDT

There's something twice the size of Texas floating just north of the Hawaiian Islands, but it's no tropical resort.

It's a pile of human litter, mostly plastic, swirling in what marine scientists know as the North Pacific Gyre, where all the ocean's currents converge. And officials say its testament to an enormous pollution problem.

Monday night, Azusa followed the lead of Los Angeles County and became one of a growing number of local and national governments to begin curbing the use of plastic bags, seen as both a blight issue and environmental threat.

"We have to think about pollution and the impacts on sea animals," said Azusa mayor Joe Rocha. "It's a small step, but it is one step."

China, Ireland and South Africa have implemented tough measures, either banning free, carry-out plastic bags or imposing per-bag fees. San Francisco in 2007 was the first U.S. city to ban plastic bags.

The county approved a program in January requiring large grocery stores, retailers and pharmacies to reduce plastic bag usage by 30 percent in 2010 and 65 percent by 2013, or face prohibitions on plastic bags or per-bag fees.

"The Board of Supervisors can only implement it in the unincorporated areas," said Coby Skye, county associate civil engineer. "We want to implement it county-wide, so we sent a letter to all the cities in L.A. County, asking them to implement the program."

Skye said the eventual goal is to phase out plastic bag use.

L.A. County residents use billions of plastic bags annually, officials said, and less than 5 percent are recycled.

"We've seen more and more plastic bags lining the rivers, the parks and beaches," said Sarah Abramson, director of coastal resources for Heal the Bay. "The solution is relatively simple because there are items such as reusable bags."

Abramson said plastic bags can kill marine animals, who easily mistake them for food and eat them, clogging their digestive tracts. Animals can also become entangled in the bags, she added.

Azusa officials approved a resolution to implement the county program Monday, and will soon vote on an ordinance. Officials are considering producing their own city-branded reusable bags.

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The Results are in...Over 92% of IKEA Customers Bagged the Plastic Bag!

PR Newswire -- Wednesday, Apr. 2 2008

It's a dialogue we hear everyday. Can we? Do we? Will we really change our behavior to be environmentally responsible? IKEA believed we could and would. With the introduction of its leadership 'bag the plastic bag' program in March 2007, IKEA set a goal of reducing its US stores' plastic bag consumption by 50%; from 70 million to 35 million plastic bags in the first year. The call was to go reusable with the iconic IKEA blue bag for \$.59 or use an alternative reusable bag. And IKEA also said if that was not an acceptable solution, IKEA plastic bags could be purchased for five-cents, with all proceeds going to American Forests (the nation's oldest non-profit citizens conservation organization) to plant trees to restore forests and help reduce CO2 emissions.

Now it's one year since the program began and IKEA is overwhelmed with the stunning results; more than 92% of their customers said no more plastic bags! Expectations were exceeded and IKEA learned their customers welcome the opportunity to find new ways to be environmentally responsible. This landmark program has now resulted in IKEA taking another step forward; as of October 1, 2008, IKEA will no longer offer plastic bags, and paper bags are not available in IKEA stores either. IKEA's consumer call-to-action is to use only reusable bags.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. consumes over 380 billion plastic bags, sacks and wraps each year. Each year, Americans throw away some 100 billion polyethylene plastic bags, and less than one percent of them are recycled. Single-use bags made of high-density polyethylene are the main culprit. Once brought into existence to tote purchases, they will accumulate and persist on our planet for up to a thousand years. Paper bags are also not the best alternative; stacking 10 pallets of paper bags is equivalent to one pallet of plastic, thus increasing the CO2 footprint. And it takes 14 billion trees to produce 10 billion grocery bags.

"IKEA believes home is the most important place in the world. The success of this program truly demonstrates that our customers care deeply about our global home and that we can all work together to be sustainable and environmentally responsible," said Pernille Spiers-Lopez, president, IKEA North America. "IKEA applauds its customers for being bold and courageous. Together, we have proven we can shift our behavior and make a notable environmental difference!"

"American Forests and IKEA have developed a growing environmental partnership based on Global ReLeaf tree planting over almost a decade. In that time IKEA and its co-workers and store visitors have sponsored the planting of over 725,000 trees in Global ReLeaf ecosystem restoration projects throughout the United States. In addition to CO2 sequestration, the environmental benefits of these projects in terms of clean air, pure water and improved wildlife habitat are substantial and measurable. The fact that IKEA has shown outstanding leadership in reducing plastic bag usage while providing support for Global ReLeaf environmental restoration just reinforces our pride in working with such a forward thinking company," stated Deborah Gangloff, executive director, American Forests.

Since the 'bag the plastic bag' program began in March 2007, IKEA has donated more than \$300,000 from their disposable plastic bag sales to American Forests. And since 1998, IKEA has contributed over \$728,000 for the planting of trees in the US; this is enough trees to offset approximately 100,000 tons of CO2 emissions over the next 40 years.

"The success of IKEA's 'bag the plastic bag' initiative reveals a growing public focus on the environment and a striking consumer willingness to take action on a personal level," observed Dan Esty, Director of the Center for Business and the Environment at Yale University. Dan is also co-author of the business best-seller "Green To Gold" (an IKEA advisor).

IKEA UK has also had significant success with its bag program and went plastic bag free in June 2007, while IKEA Australia stopped sales of all their plastic bags in December 2007. IKEA has also been at the forefront of a number of other environmental and social initiatives. IKEA specialists work diligently to promote healthy forestry practices. Wood used for IKEA products comes from well managed forests and not from intact, natural or old-growth forests. Other notable programs include: IWAY audits, a code of conduct for partnership with suppliers around the world where suppliers are measured on health, safety, social and environmental concerns. When developing products, IKEA abides by the strictest requirements for chemicals and substances in the world, regardless of where the products are sold.

Why it's time to pull the plug on plastic bags

Sarah Howe

BusinessGreen, 09 Apr 2008

Scrapping plastic bags may lead to some inconvenience for customers at first, but the PR benefits would outweigh any short term pain, argues Sarah Howe

To change the mindset of the general public, any marketer will need to tap into something that has a big impact on daily lives – human interest always prevails in marketing.

Even if you are bored to tears already with the issue of plastic carrier bags and the red tops' campaigns against the mighty Tesco, when you see a week-long series of Plastic Planet special reports on the BBC 10 o'clock news, you have got to admit that this topic is not only important, but has captured the consciousness and imagination of the British public.

Negative impact?

The negative environmental impact of plastic in general, and specifically the futile plastic carrier bag, is indisputable. And it is hardly a small problem when you consider some 13 billion plastic bags are handed out at the tills in the UK every year.

With China having already banned free bags in the run-up to the Beijing Olympics, why on earth is a supposedly developed and sophisticated economy, such as the one in the UK, with supposedly sophisticated retailers and marketers, still failing to address the issue? I am not bored with the topic but I am bored with the debate: Should we? Shouldn't we? What will consumers think? How should we gently ease them into becoming plastic neutral? What should we offer them instead?

The fact is the UK's big retailers are being dumb from a marketing perspective and annoyingly indecisive. The killing-off of the plastic bag is potentially a peach of a marketing opportunity. Plus, what better a way to show how corporately and socially responsible you are as a brand by taking swift and clear action on a media hot potato.

A Times survey, conducted by Populus, on 2 April 2008 also confirmed what is blatantly obvious on this issue – that consumers are smarter than the retailers. Although 72 per cent of consumers think reward points are the most effective way to reduce the number of bags used in supermarkets (well, of course we'd all like extra points thank you very much), 56 per cent believe that supermarkets should just cease to offer plastic bags. On balance, a retailer taking action would be welcomed by customers.

Opportunities lie ahead

So, has the positive impact this opportunity could have on a retail brand been lost, is it already too late for one of our supermarkets to announce that they are going to ban the nuisance things? I think that if one of them had been swift and brave enough to announce this three months ago, they may have got some flak from the media and some customers in the short-term, but it would have positively enhanced their brand and reputation in the long-term. And, even if one of them takes the decision tomorrow, it will still be beneficial from a marketing perspective.

Furthermore, it is not all about marketing impact, but sales, as well as customer acquisition and retention. If a retailer were to announce that it is banning free plastic carrier bags in its stores, might the positive impact be even greater from a sales perspective because it would be retaining and strengthening loyalty from some of its highest value customers?

Apart from anything else, why on earth aren't our retailers using power positively and responsibly? In his Budget last month, Alistair Darling told supermarkets that he expected them either to abolish plastic bags or to start charging to encourage a switch to green alternatives. It is a blunt ultimatum and one that retailers really should be adhering to.

A government having to legislate against plastic bags would be quite ridiculous. So please, Mr or Mrs Retail giant out there, take action now! What are you scared of? That you will have some weeks of very irate customers to deal with or lose a few customers? I think you are big and capable enough to cope.

As long as you give us a little notice, we will all get over it and forgive you – maybe even thank you for forcing us to be good. If people can be made to wear seatbelts and stop smoking in public, I'm sure they will be able to tear themselves away from plastic carrier bags, but this time without legislation. It would finally be a case of the powerful hand of the retail giant doing good, to ultimately do well itself.

Sarah Howe is Senior Vice President of Consulting at communications consultancy

Twenty cents for plastic bags

By Kat Kerlin, katk@newsreview.com

As Reno City Council gears up for an update on plastic bag bans at its April 23 meeting, Seattle is providing its own answer to the paper or plastic conundrum: Neither, says Seattle Mayor Greg Nickels.

"Both harm the environment," he said in a news conference reported by The Seattle Times. "Every piece of plastic ever made is still with us in the environment, and the best way to handle waste is not to create it in the first place."

Nickels and Seattle City Council president Richard Conlin have proposed a 20 cent "green fee" to encourage consumers to bring along their own shopping bags. If approved, Seattle could be canvas-bagging it by next January.

This is the first proposed green fee of its kind in the United States.

The Seattle Times said Nickels and Conlin have been trying to develop a zero waste strategy in the city. They also proposed a ban on plastic-foam food containers and cups at food-service businesses also beginning in January. Nonrecyclable plastic containers and utensils would be banned in 2010.

Seventy percent of Seattle 360 million bags a year come from grocery, convenience and drug stores. Nickels modeled the green fee on a similar program begun in 2002 in Ireland, which reduced disposable-bag use by 94 percent. However, Ireland had to raise its fee from 20 cents to 33 cents per bag before people started changing their habits.

San Francisco became the first city in the country in March 2007 to ban noncompostable plastic bags. They've replaced them with compostable plastic and paper bags. IKEA stores took the issue into its own hands by agreeing in March 2007 to charge customers 5 cents per bag, the proceeds of which go to plant trees and restore forests through American Forests.

In February, Reno Mayor Bob Cashell asked the City Council to research what other cities are doing with regard to banning plastic bags. There will be a plastic ban update at the council's April 23 meeting at 10 a.m. at the Reno City Hall, Council Chamber, 1 E. First St. The public can attend as well as submit comments by emailing the city clerk at jonesl@ci.reno.nv.us and gundersen@ci.reno.nv.us. These comments will be added to council members' packets and become part of the public record.

Environmentalists call for strict ban on plastic bags

By Pamela Raghunath, gulfnews.com – April 10, 2008

Mumbai: Young environmentalists from suburban Powai are planning to encourage schoolchildren to make cloth bags for their mothers and neighbours this summer vacation to help spread the message of saying no to plastic bags.

Several attempts to tax or ban plastic bags have failed not only because of opposition from manufacturers and traders but also because "it is so easy to simply ask for and use plastic bags from the shopkeeper and not feel guilty about contributing to our planet's degradation", said Elsie Gabriel, president, Young Environmentalists Programme Trust.

Mumbai cannot afford to forget how plastic bags were a major reason for choked drains and flooding during the torrential rains of July 2005 that claimed nearly a thousand lives, she said. "That is why our Trust has invited Mumbai's Mayor Dr Shubha Raul to visit Powai Lake, where a civic beautification project is under way, to ask her to put in place a stringent ban on plastic bags before this year's monsoon," she added.

The environmentalists live close to the Mithi River and the Powai Lake and feel it is time "our children are taught to love and conserve nature through our own actions. Therefore, it is time we stopped using plastic bags for shopping," said Gabriel. In creating awareness among the youth, the Trust takes children on field trips which include lion safari, nature treks, mangrove tours, lake ecology and rain water harvesting to get a first hand knowledge of environmental science, a subject that has been made compulsory in schools.

"What better way for stressed out students to bond with nature and experience its beauty and tranquillity," said Gabriel who is a nature artist, a full-time social worker and photographer.

Council sets goal for plastic bag reductions

Austin Business Journal

Thursday, April 10, 2008 - 4:48 PM CDT

The Austin City Council adopted a plan to reduce the number of plastic bags entering the city solid waste system by 50 percent in the next year.

The plan is a voluntary pilot program by participating local retailers and plastic bag users. The City Council passed the original resolution for plastic bag use reduction in April 2007 and stakeholders met over the last year to agree on a target reduction goal.

Under the pilot program, the Texas Retailers Association will collect biannual data on plastic bag use. City Council Member Lee Leffingwell says the city will evaluate the plan's overall success in July 2009. The city's solid waste services department will begin a concurrent pilot project to recycle plastic bags at 5,000 homes across Austin.

Earlier this month Keep Austin Beautiful launched a marketing campaign "Austin's Got a Brand New Bag" and introduced its branded reusable bag. Last year, amid talks with the city about reducing plastic bag use, Whole Foods Market [NASDAQ: WFMI] announced it would discontinue plastic bag use at all of its stores worldwide.

UK Town is officially a plastic bag-free zone

FOR plastic bags in one Borders town, doomsday has arrived.

On Friday, April 4th at midday, after months of campaigning, Selkirk had its Plastic Bag Free launch. Organisers gave away free fair-trade, recycled, cotton shopping bags to traders and shoppers as a gesture of thanks for their positive support of the initiative and for helping to make Selkirk the first Plastic Bag Free town in Scotland. And posters advising shoppers and visitors that Selkirk is Plastic Bag Free have now gone up in all of the participating shops and businesses around the Royal and Ancient Burgh.

Of the town's 108 shops and businesses, only four premises have chosen not to participate in the campaign, and another 12 have pledged their full support and will provide environmentally friendly alternatives once their current stocks of plastic bags have run out. This means that around 96% of Selkirk's traders are committed to a Plastic Bag Free town.

Campaign organiser Jenna Agate said: "Selkirk and its traders and shoppers should be rightly proud of this moment. We have become the first Plastic Bag Free town in Scotland. "Selkirk is leading the way in our effort to respect the environment and look after our countryside. In our small way we are making a difference. I am really proud of my town."

Anna Hinnigan, who has helped Mrs Agate in the campaign, said that some of the shops who haven't participated are big multinational companies and some are independent traders in town.

"Traders are perfectly entitled to their opinion," she said. "We're not here to force anything." "It's hard to get an entire town to agree on the same thing." Pat Neil, who has also been helping Mrs Agate with the campaign, said that as for new shops coming to Selkirk, the town would simply hope the shop would want to support the plastic-free policy.

"You can't make a rule," she said. "But anybody who came into town, we'd hope that they'd feel that's what they'd want to do. "We're not police. We hope they will change their minds, but that's all we can do. The job's been done and if they don't want to do it, they won't have a poster in the window and everybody else will."

And while campaign organisers are aware that the town cannot yet claim to be totally plastic bag free, they've said that the groundswell of feeling and commitment to the campaign from the people of Selkirk is enough for the town to deserve this title.

"We're really pleased with it," Mrs Hinnigan said. "You're never quite sure when you start with something—a lot of people like the idea in principle, but you're never quite sure how it'll work out.

"It seems to have worked out quite well."

By Susie Penman -- Wednesday, 9th April, 2008 09:00

Seattle Mayor wants shopping-bag tax; ban on plastic-foam boxes

Puget Sound Business Journal (Seattle) -- Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Seattle Mayor Greg Nickels wants the city's grocery, drug and convenience stores to start charging a 20-cent tax on disposable bags beginning next year and he also wants to ban plastic-foam food containers in the city. The Seattle City Council would have to approve the measures, which would take effect Jan. 1, 2009.

Nickels says that both paper and plastic bags are "harmful to the environment" and banning foam food containers will reduce the use of "environmentally harmful plastics and cut the production of greenhouse gases."

Stores would keep 5 cents of the 20-cent tax for administrative costs and those retailers with less than \$1 million in annual revenues would keep all 20 cents. Both paper and plastic bags "harm" the environment, Nickels said, saying that paper bags, because of the "environmental costs" of logging and shipping, "are actually worse for the planet" than plastic bags.

"The answer to the question 'paper or plastic' is neither ... The best way to handle a ton of waste is not to create it ... Taking a reusable bag to grocery stores and pharmacies is a simple thing that has an enormous impact," Nickels said in a statement.

Banned foam products would include plates, trays, "clamshells," and hot and cold beverage cups. Seattle Public Utilities will hire inspectors to check stores to make sure they weren't using the products, Nickels' office said.

Need plastic bag? Pay!

By Moje Ramos-Aquino, FPM

One thing I like very much here in South Africa is that every time you buy something in any store, big or small, the cashier would ask you, "Would you like a bag for that?" and adds, "That would be 20 cents, please." So you don't see any plastic trash here. Also, people learn to bring their own bags when they shop or their handbag, hands and pockets will be full.

This is one laudable practice that we should adopt in the Philippines. In the wet market, they bag your purchases twice, with clear plastic, then a sando bag. In supermarkets, most foods are previously packaged in plastic or boxes and then still put in store plastic bags at the check-out counter. Anywhere else they so liberally give away plastic bags even when you do not ask. I had boxes and boxes of plastic bags at home, which I gave away recently. At any Mini Stop Mini-mart, they give you a big styrofoam box for every siomai and rice that you buy and two small plastic bags for sauces. Maybe, if they don't do that, they could lower the price.

Where do all these used plastic bags and Styrofoam boxes end up? I dread the next big rain and the floods that might ensue because our waterways are clogged with this debris. In our little community in Sta. Mesa, we don't need the rains, our streets are always soaked in water and I suspect this is caused by all those plastic bags and wrappers carelessly thrown away by vendors, neighbors and passersby.

I praise SM for their green bag campaign. They encourage you to use your own green bag every time you shop and give you extra points as incentives added to your SM Advantage Card. SM should compel stores in their malls to emulate their admirable example and may other stores follow suit.

One thing I miss, though, are our 24-hour convenience stores. There is none here and all stores open at 8 a.m. and close at 6 p.m., 7 p.m. tops. Offices are closed during lunch breaks. Cinemas and big eateries close at midnight. After six, there is nothing much to do but watch TV and sleep. People are deathly afraid to go out when darkness sets in due to rising crimes with the unchecked entry of illegal Africans from Namibia, Zimbabwe and other conflicted African nations. Houses of the rich are fortified with electric fences, other protective gadgets and paid security surveillance services. The poor use store-bought locks and bolts. I am in a protected compound, yet the house girls here tell me every night to bolt and lock every door and window,

Back in Manila, you could attend to your business affairs during the day then do shopping, go to the beauty parlor, dine, see a movie, go disco or ballroom dancing, even go to the wet market during the night. The little wet market (Talipapa) at V. Mapa Street is open until supply lasts.

Nassau to require retailers to recycle bags

By William Murphy, Newsday.com

March 23, 2008

Nassau County is finally trying to get a grip on those plastic shopping bags that end up adorning parking meters, trees, fences and other public structures.

Legislation to be introduced this week would require many supermarkets and retailers in Nassau to collect and recycle plastic bags, which are not biodegradable, and would encourage shoppers to switch to reusable sacks.

Suffolk County enacted a plastic bag recycling law in December, New York City followed in January, and many other municipalities have legislation in the works. The Nassau County Legislature is expected to consider the bill in committee on April 7 and vote on it later in the month.

Nassau Legis. David Denenberg (D-Merrick), one of the sponsors of the measure, said the final bill might require retailers to take responsibility for their advertising fliers, which also end up blowing onto neighboring properties.

"The fliers are a part of their business and they should be a good neighbor and be responsible for picking them up," Denenberg said.

He said the legislation also would include a provision requiring stores that try to circumvent the law by using paper bags to accept them for recycling.

A spokesman for Stop & Shop, which has 17 supermarkets in Nassau, said the chain already has recycling bins for plastic bags in all its Long Island stores. The spokesman, Robert Keane, said he had not heard about the proposal on fliers and paper bags and declined to comment on them.

A draft of the Nassau County bill says it would apply to stores with more than 5,000 square feet of retail or wholesale space, or which are part of a chain.

The affected stores would have to provide recyclable paper bags or offer reusable bags for sale, according to the draft. Stores that continued to use plastic bags would have to provide bins for used plastic bags and recycle the plastic it collects, the draft said.

The county Department of Consumer Affairs would be responsible for enforcement and could impose fines of up to \$300 per day for infractions, the draft said.

The county's environmental coordinator, Thomas Maher, said the administration of County Executive Thomas Suozzi had been working with the legislature on the bill, and was generally supportive.

The Suffolk County recycling bill has worked well, according to its sponsor, Legis. Wayne Horsley (D-Babylon).

"I see recycling bins at every store I pass. It's working well and I'm glad New York City, and now Nassau County, are following suit," Horsley said. "We got a call recently from Dutchess County, which is also interested."

Horsley said his review of legislation around the country shows it is basically the same, although localities vary on how large a store has to be before it has to recycle. Suffolk, and the Nassau proposal, require the recycling bin be "at" the store, while New York City requires the bins be "in" the stores, Horsley noted.

Out of the bag

- The annual consumption rate for plastic shopping bags worldwide is 500 billion.
- About 100 billion are used annually by Americans.
- Four of five grocery bags in the United States are plastic.
- Plastic bags are among the 12 most common items collected in coastal clean-ups.
- About 3.9 percent (1.4 million tons) of all plastics in 2003 were recycled.
- Ireland imposed a tax on plastic bags in 2002 and they have all but disappeared from use.
- Bangladesh bans them.

SOURCES: U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION; REUSABLEBAGS.COM;

Cityfront: Bagging the plastic

Jerusalem Post Online

Aimee Neistat , The Jerusalem Post -- Apr. 10, 2008

It seems that the majority of Israelis have no idea that the innocent-looking plastic bags in which they carry home their groceries pose a serious danger to the environment.

Plastic bags make up over one-quarter of the total volume of landfill in Israel, according to Knesset Internal Affairs and Environment Committee member Dov Kheinin (Hadash). In light of this alarming statistic, Israel is starting to take action to reduce the excessive consumption of plastic bags, as many other countries have done over the past decade.

A few months ago, Kheinin and fellow MK Estherina Tartman (Israel Beiteinu) introduced a bill that would require store owners to charge customers NIS 1 per bag. The fee aims to deter shoppers from using plastic bags and to seek instead more environmentally friendly alternatives, such as reusable or paper sacks.

This bill is based on a successful precedent in Ireland, where its population of four million was consuming 1.5 billion plastic bags per year. In 2002, the Irish government introduced the "PlasTax," a charge of 15 Eurocents per bag. As a result, plastic bag consumption plummeted by 95 percent, according to 2005 figures.

With its population of almost 6.5 million, Israel consumes five billion plastic bags per year - approximately 14 million bags per day. The Irish model is not the only one that has proven to reduce plastic bag consumption. In 2003, the Australian Retailers Association adopted a Code of Practice for the Management of Plastic Carry Bags. The code encourages retailers to voluntarily reduce their distribution of lightweight plastic bags.

Subsequently, supermarkets began selling and encouraging the use of reusable "Green" bags, while other retailers reverted to recyclable paper bags. Within two years, supermarkets were issuing 45% fewer plastic bags and 90% of small- to medium-sized retailers had reduced their bag distribution.

Other countries have employed a different approach. In 2003, South Africa banned the free distribution of plastic shopping bags thinner than 30 microns (30 millionths of a meter), as will China this year. Kheinin hopes his law, if passed, will encourage people to choose alternative means of carrying their groceries. The option he recommends is the Green bag. Compared to regular plastic shopping bags, the Green bag is more durable and can hold many more items, and is therefore more likely to be reused.

When asked why Israel is attempting to introduce a bag fee as opposed to other approaches, Kheinin says: "We don't want to reinvent the wheel. [The Irish method] has really proven itself... The other option is to ban plastic bags altogether. We decided to begin with a less drastic [alternative]."

He believes that by hitting consumers' wallets, a per-bag fee will prove the most effective in changing their behavior. "The most important thing to understand is we don't want people to pay more. The economic [means] is only the tool to make people move on to better solutions," he explains.

The bill is currently in its first reading in the Knesset. According to Kheinin, most MKs have expressed support for the legislation, though there has been "no real debate" as yet. If the law is passed, the fee will be introduced gradually to ensure that the public understands its intentions, adds Kheinin.

But not everybody is confident about the effectiveness of the proposed law. Batya Malichi, a board member of the Eco-Judaism Project (EJP), which seeks to raise awareness of the connection between Judaism and the environment, is skeptical of how enforceable the law will be. "Are [government agencies] going to go into every single shop in Israel and make sure people are charging [for each plastic bag]?" she questions.

The EJP recently held a community awareness day at Kfar Saba's Arim Mall. Malichi spoke to Sharon-area residents, who, she says, all knew about the bill and were doubtful it would pass. However, she adds: "People knew immediately that if [something] affects your pocketbook, then it changes behavior." In that sense, the law sounds like a great idea, she says.

Yehuda Olander, manager of the Sharon District Regional Division for the Quality of the Environment, attributes Israel's lack of progress on environment preservation to its constant occupation with survival. "Survival here is not only talking about the environment, it's talking about security," he explains. "Ten to 20 years ago, when the rest of the world began

caring for the environment, Israel was focused on surviving as a country. "But it works to Israel's advantage," Olander continues. Through other countries' successes and failures, Israel can learn how to be more environmentally responsible.

"[Israelis] come back from Europe and [other parts of the world] and say 'Wow, look what they have done - how they recycle and how they avoid traveling too much in their cars.'" Because plastic bags are free, people happily take an unlimited number, particularly at the supermarket, he explains. They have no idea of the detriment their consumption causes to the environment, he adds.

"What Israel needs is education and explanation," Olander says, suggesting schools and television campaigns as the most effective mediums for educating the public. "Children have a big influence on their families," he says. "Simply by teaching children in school that plastic bags are bad for the environment, we can reach the wider public. Not only will children grow up with better environmental consciousness, but they will also go home to their parents and tell them not to take as many bags when they do the shopping."

Even though people in Israel are starting to become aware of the damage caused by using plastic bags, says Malichi, they often feel powerless to help. "If you use just one fewer bag, you're already helping the situation. If you reuse a plastic bag, you're already helping the situation. Anything that delays that bag from reaching the landfill is a plus," she encourages.

Despite the prospective obstacles, Malichi and Olander are both optimistic that Israel will achieve a shift in environmental consciousness. "I've been using these Green bags for a year now. In the beginning I was the only one. Now I see there are more people [using them] and people come up and ask me where I bought the bag," says Malichi. "I think some people don't want to go out of their way to find a solution, but if we bring the solution closer to them [by having vendors sell reusable bags] they'll be willing to use it."

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MARCH 28, 2008

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2007—08 REGULAR SESSION

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 2058

Introduced by Assembly Member Levine

February 19, 2008

An act to amend Section 42257 of, and to add Section 42252.5 to, the Public Resources Code, relating to recycling.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 2058, as amended, Levine. Recycling: plastic carryout bags.

~~(1) Existing~~

Existing law requires an operator of a store, as defined, to establish an at-store recycling program that provides to customers the opportunity to return clean plastic carryout bags to that store. Existing law imposes various requirements on at-store recycling programs, including requiring a store to maintain records describing the collection, transport, and recycling of plastic carryout bags collected by the store.

This bill would, on and after July 1, 2011, prohibit a store from providing plastic carryout bags to customers unless the store demonstrates an increased diversion rate, as defined, of 35% in the number of plastic carryout bags provided by the store during a specified period. The bill would, on and after July 1, ~~2013~~ 2012 prohibit a store from providing plastic carryout bags to customers unless the store demonstrates an increased diversion rate of 70% in the number of plastic carryout bags provided by the store during a specified period. ~~The bill would authorize a store to sell a plastic carryout bag to a customer at a cost greater than or equal to \$0.15 per bag as an alternative to demonstrating the increased diversion rates. The bill would require a store that is not complying with the diversion rate requirements to sell~~

plastic carryout bags to customers for not less than \$0.15 per bag. A store charging customers for plastic carryout bags would be required to demonstrate that any revenue collected, excluding the cost of the bags and a reasonable financial return, is used to fund specified programs.

~~(2) Under existing law, the above provisions are effective only until January 1, 2013.~~

~~This bill would extend the effective date of those provisions until January 1, 2015.~~

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.
State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 42252.5 is added to the Public Resources
2 Code, to read:

3 42252.5. (a) Except as provided in subdivision (c), on and
4 after July 1, 2011, a store shall not provide a plastic carryout bag
5 to a customer unless the store demonstrates to the board that, in
6 comparison to the number of plastic carryout bags provided by the
7 store to customers and subjected to diversion in the 2007 calendar
8 year, at least 35 percent more plastic carryout bags provided by
9 the store to customers during the 12-month period ending on
10 December 31, 2010, and annually thereafter, have been subjected
11 to diversion, as described in subdivision (d).

12 (b) Except as provided in subdivision (c), on and after July 1,
13 ~~2013~~ 2012, a store shall not provide a plastic carryout bag to a
14 customer unless the store demonstrates to the board that, in
15 comparison to the number of plastic carryout bags provided by the
16 store to customers and subjected to diversion in the 2007 calendar
17 year, at least 70 percent more plastic carryout bags provided by
18 the store to customers during the 12-month period ending on
19 December 31, ~~2012~~ 2011, and annually thereafter, have been
20 subjected to diversion, as described in subdivision (d).

21 ~~(e) A store may sell a plastic carryout bag to a customer at a~~
22 ~~cost greater than or equal to fifteen cents (\$0.15) per bag.~~

23 (c) *If a store does not comply with subdivisions (a) and (b), the*
24 *store may only provide a plastic carryout bag to a customer if the*
25 *store charges the customer not less than fifteen cents (\$0.15) per*
26 *bag.*

1 (d) A store charging customers for plastic carryout bags
2 pursuant to subdivision (c) shall demonstrate that any revenue
3 collected, excluding the cost of the plastic carryout bags and a
4 reasonable financial return, shall be used, in consultation with
5 local communities, to fund plastic bag litter reduction, cleanup,
6 waste reduction, and recycling activities.

7 ~~(d)~~

8 (e) (1) Diversion, for purposes of this section, includes a
9 reduction in the volume of plastic carryout bags provided to
10 customers and an increase in the volume of plastic carryout bags
11 recycled.

12 (2) All of the following are diversion for purposes of this
13 section:

14 (A) Diversion of plastic carryout bags provided by an individual
15 store.

16 (B) Diversion of plastic carryout bags provided by a chain of
17 stores under common ownership.

18 (C) Diversion of plastic carryout bags within a city, county, or
19 region.

20 (D) Diversion of plastic carryout bags within the entire state.

21 ~~SEC. 2. Section 42257 of the Public Resources Code is~~
22 ~~amended to read:~~

23 ~~42257. This chapter shall remain in effect only until January~~
24 ~~1, 2015, and as of that date is repealed, unless a later enacted~~
25 ~~statute, that is enacted before January 1, 2015, deletes or extends~~
26 ~~that date.~~

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY APRIL 7, 2008
AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MARCH 28, 2008
CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2007–08 REGULAR SESSION

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 2829

Introduced by Assembly Member Davis
(Coauthors: Assembly Members Price and Swanson)

February 22, 2008

An act to amend Sections 42250, 42252, and 42254 of, to add Sections ~~42252.4, 42252.5, 42252.4~~ and 42252.6 to, and to repeal Section 42257 of, the Public Resources Code, relating to recycling.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 2829, as amended, Davis. Recycling: plastic carryout bags.

(1) Existing law requires an operator of a store, as defined, to establish an at-store recycling program that provides an opportunity for a customer of the store to return clean plastic carryout bags to that store (at-store recycling program). Existing law requires a plastic carryout bag provided by a store to have printed or displayed on the bag the words "PLEASE RETURN TO A PARTICIPATING STORE FOR RECYCLING." A local agency or the state is authorized to enforce these provisions by imposing a civil penalty for a violation of these requirements. These provisions are repealed on January 1, 2013.

This bill would delete that repeal date and additionally require each plastic carryout bag provided by the store, on and after July 1, 2009, to have printed or displayed on the bag an environmental awareness message describing the negative impacts on the environment and wildlife caused by littered plastic carryout bags and encouraging the use of reusable bags. The board would be required by July 1, 2009, to develop

that environmental awareness message, in consultation with specified stakeholders.

~~The bill would prohibit the operator of a store, on and after July 1, 2010, from providing a plastic carryout bag to a customer unless the operator demonstrates that the store has achieved a diversion rate of not less than 30%. The bill would also prohibit the operator of a store, on and after July 1, 2013, from providing a plastic carryout bag to a customer unless the operator demonstrates that the store has achieved a diversion rate of not less than 65%. The bill would specify a formula for determining the diversion rate and would authorize an operator of a store to comply with these diversion requirements by reducing the quantity of plastic carryout bags provided by the store, by increasing the quantity of plastic carryout bags recycled at that store, or by taking any other action to achieve the diversion rate.~~

The bill would require, on and after July 1, 2009, a person who is provided a plastic carryout bag by a store to pay the store a plastic carryout bag impact fee of \$0.25 per bag. A store would be required to collect the plastic carryout bag impact fee from the customer at the time of sale and would be authorized to retain 3% of the fee as reimbursement for any costs associated with the collection of the fee.

The bill would require the store to remit the remainder of the fee collected to the board on a quarterly schedule for deposit in the California Plastic Carryout Bag Impact Fund, which the bill would create in the State Treasury. The board would be authorized to expend the moneys in the fund, upon appropriation by the Legislature, as reimbursement for the board's costs of collection, auditing, and making refunds associated with the fund and to make payments to counties and cities for plastic carryout bag litter prevention, plastic carryout bag litter cleanup activities, and source reduction efforts to reduce the use of plastic carryout bags. The bill would specify a procedure for the disbursement of those payments on a per capita basis.

(2) Existing law prohibits a city, county, or other public agency from adopting, implementing, or enforcing an ordinance, resolution, regulation, or rule that, among other things, imposes a plastic carryout bag fee upon a store that has established an at-store recycling provision.

This bill would delete the prohibition on a city, county, or other public agency from imposing a plastic carryout bag fee upon a store.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.
State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

1 SECTION 1. (a) The Legislature finds and declares all of the
2 following:

3 (1) The fee imposed pursuant to Section 42252.6 of the Public
4 Resources Code will mitigate the environmental, public health,
5 and other public-financed impacts caused by the use of plastic
6 bags by offsetting the costs of programs to prevent the littering of
7 plastic carryout bags, cleaning up the litter caused by plastic
8 carryout bags, and encouraging the reduction of the use of plastic
9 carryout bags.

10 (2) The imposition of the fee would not result in the imposition
11 of a tax within the meaning of Article XIII A of the California
12 Constitution because the amount and nature of the fee have a fair
13 and reasonable relationship to the environmental, public health,
14 and societal burdens imposed by the use of plastic carryout bags,
15 and there is a sufficient nexus between the fees imposed and the
16 use of those fees to support programs to prevent the littering of
17 plastic carryout bags, cleaning up the litter caused by plastic
18 carryout bags, and encouraging the reduction of the use of plastic
19 carryout bags.

20 (b) It is the intent of the Legislature that the fee that is imposed
21 pursuant to Section 42252.6 of the Public Resources Code be
22 consistent with *Sinclair Paint Co. v. State Bd. of Equalization*
23 (1997) 15 Cal.4th 866.

24 SEC. 2. Section 42250 of the Public Resources Code is
25 amended to read:

26 42250. For purposes of this chapter, the following definitions
27 shall apply:

28 ~~(a) (1) Notwithstanding Section 40124, “diversion rate” means~~
29 ~~a percentage calculated using the sum of the following amounts:~~

30 ~~(A) The base year consumption, minus the reporting year~~
31 ~~consumption, divided by the base year consumption.~~

32 ~~(B) The amount of plastic carryout bags recycled during the~~
33 ~~reporting year, divided by the base year consumption.~~

34 ~~(2) “Base year consumption” means the amount of plastic~~
35 ~~carryout bags provided to consumers during the 2007–08 fiscal~~
36 ~~year, based on the data reported to the board pursuant to Section~~
37 ~~42252 and as determined in accordance with subdivision (d) of~~
38 ~~Section 42252.5.~~

- 1 ~~(3) “Reporting year consumption” is the amount of plastic~~
2 ~~carryout bags provided to consumers during a specified fiscal year,~~
3 ~~based on data reported to the board pursuant to Section 42252 and~~
4 ~~as determined in accordance with subdivision (d) of Section~~
5 ~~42252.5.~~
6 ~~(b)~~
7 (a) “Fund” means the California Plastic Carryout Bag Impact
8 Fund created pursuant to Section 42252.6.
9 ~~(e)~~
10 (b) “Litter” means the litter resulting from the improper disposal
11 of plastic carryout bags.
12 ~~(d)~~
13 (c) “Manufacturer” means the producer of a plastic carryout
14 bag sold to a store.
15 ~~(e)~~
16 (d) “Operator” means a person in control of, or having daily
17 responsibility for, the daily operation of a store, which may include,
18 but is not limited to, the owner of the store.
19 ~~(f)~~
20 (e) “Plastic carryout bag” means a plastic carryout bag provided
21 by a store to a customer at the point of sale.
22 ~~(g)~~
23 (f) “Plastic carryout bag impact fee” means the fee imposed
24 pursuant to Section 42252.6.
25 ~~(h)~~
26 (g) “Reusable bag” means either of the following:
27 (1) A bag that has handles and is made of cloth or other machine
28 washable fabric.
29 (2) A durable plastic bag that has handles and at least 2.25 mils
30 thick and is specifically designed and manufactured for multiple
31 reuse.
32 ~~(i)~~
33 (h) “Source reduction” means a decrease in the use of plastic
34 carryout bags.
35 ~~(j)~~
36 (i) “Store” means a retail establishment that provides plastic
37 carryout bags to its customers as a result of the sale of a product
38 and that meets either of the following requirements:
39 (1) Meet the definition of a “supermarket” as found in Section
40 14526.5.

1 (2) Has over 10,000 square feet of retail space that generates
2 sales or use tax pursuant to the Bradley-Burns Uniform Local Sales
3 and Use Tax Law (Part 1.5 (commencing with Section 7200) of
4 Division 2 of the Revenue and Taxation Code) and has a pharmacy
5 licensed pursuant to Chapter 9 (commencing with Section 4000)
6 of Division 2 of the Business and Professions Code.

7 SEC. 3. Section 42252 of the Public Resources Code is
8 amended to read:

9 42252. An at-store recycling program provided by the operator
10 of a store shall include all of the following:

11 (a) Each plastic carryout bag provided by the store shall have
12 printed or displayed on the bag, in a manner visible to a consumer,
13 both of the following:

14 (1) The words “PLEASE RETURN TO A PARTICIPATING
15 STORE FOR RECYCLING.”

16 (2) On and after July 1, 2009, an environmental awareness
17 message developed by the board pursuant to Section 42252.4,
18 describing the negative impacts on the environment and wildlife
19 caused by littered plastic carryout bags and encouraging the use
20 of reusable bags.

21 (b) A plastic carryout bag collection bin shall be placed at each
22 store and shall be visible, easily accessible to the consumer, and
23 clearly marked that the collection bin is available for the purpose
24 of collecting and recycling plastic carryout bags.

25 (c) All plastic bags collected by the store shall be collected,
26 transported, and recycled in a manner that does not conflict with
27 the local jurisdiction’s source reduction and recycling element,
28 pursuant to Chapter 2 (commencing with Section 41000) and
29 Chapter 3 (commencing with Section 41300) of Part 2.

30 (d) The store shall maintain records describing the collection,
31 transport, and recycling of plastic bags collected for a minimum
32 of three years and shall make the records available to the board or
33 the local jurisdiction, upon request, to demonstrate compliance
34 with this chapter.

35 (e) The operator of the store shall make reusable bags available
36 to customers within the store, which may be purchased and used
37 in lieu of using a plastic carryout bag or paper bag. This subdivision
38 is not applicable to a retail establishment specified pursuant to
39 subdivision (b) of Section 42251.

1 SEC. 4. Section 42252.4 is added to the Public Resources Code,
2 to read:

3 42252.4. On or before July 1, 2009, the board shall develop
4 an environmental awareness message, for purposes of paragraph
5 (2) of subdivision (a) of Section 42252, in consultation with
6 representatives of the League of California Cities, the California
7 State Association of Counties, manufacturers, operators, the
8 California Grocers Association, environmental organizations, and
9 other interested stakeholders.

10 ~~SEC. 5. Section 42252.5 is added to the Public Resources Code,~~
11 ~~to read:~~

12 ~~42252.5. (a) On and after July 1, 2010, except as provided in~~
13 ~~subdivision (b), the operator of a store shall not provide a plastic~~
14 ~~carryout bag to a customer unless the operator demonstrates that~~
15 ~~the store has achieved a diversion rate of not less than 30 percent~~
16 ~~for the 12-month period ending June 30, 2010, and for the~~
17 ~~12-month period commencing annually thereafter, as compared~~
18 ~~to the 12-month period ending June 30, 2008.~~

19 ~~(b) On and after July 1, 2013, the operator of a store shall not~~
20 ~~provide a plastic carryout bag to a customer unless the operator~~
21 ~~demonstrates that the store has achieved a diversion rate of not~~
22 ~~less than 65 percent for the 12-month period ending June 30, 2013,~~
23 ~~and annually thereafter, as compared to the 12-month period ending~~
24 ~~June 30, 2008.~~

25 ~~(c) The operator of a store may comply with this section by~~
26 ~~reducing the quantity of plastic carryout bags provided by the store,~~
27 ~~by increasing the quantity of plastic carryout bags recycled at that~~
28 ~~store, or by taking any other action to achieve the diversion rate~~
29 ~~required by this section.~~

30 ~~(d) The operator of a store may demonstrate compliance with~~
31 ~~the diversion rate requirements of this section by using any of the~~
32 ~~following means of quantifying the amount of plastic carryout~~
33 ~~bags provided to consumers and the amount of plastic carryout~~
34 ~~bags recycled:~~

35 ~~(1) The amount of plastic carryout bags provided and the amount~~
36 ~~of plastic carryout bags recycled for an individual store.~~

37 ~~(2) The amount of plastic carryout bags provided and the amount~~
38 ~~of plastic carryout bags recycled for a chain of stores.~~

1 ~~(3) The amount of plastic carryout bags provided and the amount~~
2 ~~of plastic carryout bags recycled within a city, county, or specified~~
3 ~~region of the state.~~

4 ~~(4) The amount of plastic carryout bags provided and the amount~~
5 ~~of plastic carryout bags recycled for the state.~~

6 ~~SEC. 6.~~

7 *SEC. 5.* Section 42252.6 is added to the Public Resources Code,
8 to read:

9 42252.6. (a) On and after July 1, 2009, a person who is
10 provided a plastic carryout bag by a store shall pay the store a
11 plastic carryout bag impact fee of twenty-five cents (\$0.25) per
12 bag.

13 (1) The plastic carryout bag impact fee imposed pursuant to
14 subdivision (a) shall be separately stated by the store on the receipt
15 given to the customer at the time of sale.

16 (2) The store shall collect the plastic carryout bag impact fee
17 from the customer at the time of sale and may retain 3 percent of
18 the fee as reimbursement for any costs associated with the
19 collection of the fee. The store shall remit the remainder to the
20 board on a quarterly schedule for deposit in the California Plastic
21 Carryout Bag Impact Fund, which is hereby created in the State
22 Treasury.

23 (b) The moneys deposited in the fund may be expended by the
24 board, upon appropriation by the Legislature, for the following
25 purposes:

26 (1) The board may expend not more than 3 percent of the total
27 annual revenue deposited in the fund as reimbursement for the
28 board's costs of collection, auditing, and making refunds associated
29 with the fund.

30 (2) The board may expend the remaining moneys in the fund
31 to make payments to counties and cities for litter prevention, litter
32 cleanup activities, and source reduction efforts related to plastic
33 carryout bags on a per capita basis for those activities, in
34 accordance with all of the following:

35 (A) The payments made pursuant to this paragraph may not be
36 expended for activities unrelated to litter prevention, litter cleanup
37 activities, or source reduction efforts related to plastic carryout
38 bags.

39 (B) To receive funds pursuant to this section, a city or county
40 shall fill out and return a funding request form to the board. The

1 form shall specify the litter prevention, litter cleanup activities, or
2 source reduction efforts related to plastic carryout bags for which
3 the funds will be used.

4 (C) The board shall annually prepare and distribute a funding
5 request form to each city and county. The form shall specify the
6 amount of funds available for litter prevention, litter cleanup
7 activities, and source reduction efforts related to plastic carryout
8 bags for which the jurisdiction is eligible. The form shall not
9 exceed one double-sided page in length, and may be submitted
10 electronically. If a city or county does not return the funding
11 request form within 120 days of receipt of the form from the board,
12 the city or county is not eligible to receive the funds for that
13 funding cycle.

14 (D) For the purposes of this paragraph, per capita population
15 shall be based on the population of the incorporated area of a city
16 and the unincorporated area of a county.

17 ~~SEC. 7.~~

18 *SEC. 6.* Section 42254 of the Public Resources Code is
19 amended to read:

20 42254. (a) The Legislature finds and declares that all of these
21 are matters of statewide interest and concern:

22 (1) Requiring a store to collect, transport, or recycle plastic
23 carryout bags.

24 (2) Imposing a plastic carryout bag fee upon a store.

25 (3) Requiring a store to conduct auditing or reporting with regard
26 to plastic carryout bags.

27 (b) Unless expressly authorized by this chapter, a city, county,
28 or other public agency shall not adopt, implement, or enforce an
29 ordinance, resolution, regulation, or rule to do any of the following:

30 (1) Require a store that is in compliance with this chapter to
31 collect, transport, or recycle plastic carryout bags.

32 (2) Require auditing or reporting requirements that are in
33 addition to what is required by subdivision (d) of Section 42252,
34 upon a store that is in compliance with this chapter.

35 (c) This section does not prohibit the adoption, implementation,
36 or enforcement of any local ordinance, resolution, regulation, or
37 rule governing curbside or drop off recycling programs operated
38 by, or pursuant to a contract with, a city, county, or other public
39 agency, including any action relating to fees for these programs.

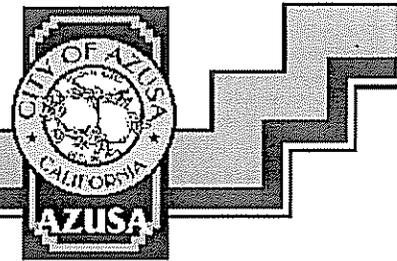
1 (d) This section does not affect any contract, franchise, permit,
2 license, or other arrangement regarding the collection or recycling
3 of solid waste or household hazardous waste.

4 ~~SEC. 8.~~

5 *SEC. 7.* Section 42257 of the Public Resources Code is
6 repealed.

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D-4.



CONSENT ITEM

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL
FROM: F.M. DELACH, CITY MANAGER *FMD*
DATE: APRIL 7, 2008
SUBJECT: RESOLUTION TO JOIN THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY SINGLE-USE BAG REDUCTION AND RECYCLING PROGRAM

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that City Council approve attached resolution to participate in the implementation of Los Angeles County Single-Use Bag and Recycling Program, and authorize staff to support County legislative efforts to eliminate the sunset clause included in AB 2449 (Public Resources Code Section 42257).

BACKGROUND

On March 12, 2008, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors requested the City of Azusa to join their program to reduce consumption and increase recycling of carryout plastic bags at retail establishments. The County adopted the program on January 22, 2008, and set as its goals the reduction of plastic bag disposal by 30 percent by July 1, 2010, and 65 percent by July 1, 2013, with provision that failure to achieve the program goals result in a ban on plastic bags at affected stores.

According to the County, approximately 6 billion plastic carryout bags are consumed in Los Angeles County each year. Currently, less than 5 percent of bags are recycled and the rest end up in landfills or on our beaches, waterways, parks, and roads in the form of litter. Plastic bag litter makes up as much as 25 percent of the litter stream and significantly impacts our communities and the environment. In Los Angeles County alone, local and State governments spend tens of millions of dollars each year on the prevention, cleanup, and enforcement of activities to reduce litter.

The County requests that the City of Azusa adopt the attached resolution which would instruct the City Manager to coordinate with the County on program implementation activities, including preparation of an ordinance for the City Council's consideration that would provide authority and appropriate measures to fully effect the program goals within the City.

FISCAL IMPACT

Additional program information is included in Attachment. It appears that additional staff time will be required to work with the County and coordinate implementation activities and quantify the results. If there are program shortcomings and goals are not achieved, it appears that enforcement activities would be necessary. Possible funding sources include AB 939 Fees, Sewer Assessment District funds, and Beverage Container Recycling and Litter Clean up Grant funds. Additional funding may be available from the County or the State, but amounts and exact sources are unknown at this time.

Prepared by

Cary Kalscheuer, Assistant to the Director of Utilities



Model_Reso.doc



Fact_Sheet.pdf

RESOLUTION NO. _____

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY
OF THE CITY OF AZUSA, CALIFORNIA TO JOIN THE
LOS ANGELES COUNTY SINGLE-USE BAG
REDUCTION AND RECYCLING PROGRAM**

WHEREAS, on January 22, 2008, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors adopted a comprehensive program to reduce consumption and increase recycling of carryout plastic bags in the unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County, with the goal of decreasing the disposal rate by 30 percent by July 1, 2010, and by 65 percent by July 1, 2013, with the provision that failure to achieve these goals triggers action to establish a ban on plastic bags at affected stores; and

WHEREAS, each year, approximately 6 billion plastic carryout bags are consumed in Los Angeles County, the equivalent of 600 bags per person per year, with less than five percent being recycled; and

WHEREAS, due to their propensity to become litter, plastic carryout bags cause harm to marine animals and other aquatic life, and have a significant negative impact on our quality of life and the environment; and

WHEREAS, in Los Angeles County, local governments and State agencies spend tens of millions of dollars each year on prevention, cleanup, and enforcement activities to reduce litter at beaches, waterways, parks and roads; and

WHEREAS, as demonstrated in other countries as well as other communities in the United States, the widespread use of reusable bags is extremely effective in reducing plastic bag consumption and plastic bag litter; and

WHEREAS, the use of reusable bags can be increased and consumption of carryout plastic bags reduced through a combination of supermarket and retail store employee training, incentives, and public education programs; and

WHEREAS, the County's program provides a framework for shared responsibility among stakeholders, incorporating measurable goals and monitoring the use and recycling of plastic bags; and

WHEREAS, the County has extended an invitation to the City of Azusa and other cities to participate in this program by sharing ideas and coordinating efforts.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City Council of the City of Azusa, hereby adopts all of the following:

1. That the City of Azusa agrees to participate in the County of Los Angeles Single-Use Bag Reduction and Recycling Program; and,

2. That the City Manager is instructed to coordinate with the County of Los Angeles in developing and implementing the Program, including imposition of the ban on carryout plastic bags at affected stores if established disposal rate reduction goals are not met, and coordinating legislative advocacy efforts, as appropriate; and,

County of Los Angeles
Single-Use Bag Reduction and Recycling Program - Fact Sheet

On January 22, 2008, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors adopted the *Single-Use Bag Reduction and Recycling Program*, a comprehensive strategy to reduce plastic bag litter. The Program aligns supermarkets, retailers, environmental groups, the plastic bag industry, local government, and the public to phase out plastic bags while increasing the use of reusable bags. The Program is summarized below:

Framework

1. County and stakeholders develop and establish a comprehensive program to:
 - Promote reusable bags
 - Increase at-store recycling of plastic bags
 - Reduce carryout plastic bag usage
 - Increase the post-consumer recycled content of paper bags (minimum 40%)
 - Promote public awareness of litter impacts and consumer responsibility
2. Work with affected stores (initially includes large supermarkets and retail stores as defined under AB 2449; may be expanded to include convenience, franchise, and other stores distributing plastic bags in the future) to develop and implement required store-specific programs that would include:
 - Training that targets unnecessary double bagging and increased use of reusable bags
 - Incentives for reducing plastic bag usage (e.g. per-bag credit or fee)
 - Reusable bag promotions and educational efforts
3. Establish aggressive goals for reducing plastic bag usage and increasing recycling using total consumption for Fiscal Year 2007-08 as the baseline:
 - 30 percent disposal reduction by July 1, 2010, and
 - 65 percent disposal reduction by July 1, 2013
4. Assist partner cities in establishing a similar program, including sharing of relevant information and public education and outreach materials. City programs can utilize the County's Program as a framework while tailoring implementation according to their needs.
5. Establish significant consequences if Program goals are not met, including outright plastic bag ban.
6. Pursue State legislative efforts to:
 - Establish a statewide plastic bag fee with proceeds distributed to local governments on a per-capita basis to fund litter prevention and source reduction efforts.
 - Allow local government implementation of a per-bag fee, since fees have been found to be effective in reducing plastic bag usage.
 - Implement statewide benchmarks equivalent to Program goals above.
 - Print an environmental message on each plastic bag describing the negative impacts of plastic bag litter and the benefits of using reusable bags.
 - Repeal the sunset provision of AB 2449 (Public Resources Code Section 42257) to eliminate the need for the State Legislature to reintroduce and adopt a new plastic bag recycling law by January 1, 2013, which may or may not contain the existing and proposed elements of AB 2449 that are crucial to the efforts undertaken by local governments.

Program Benefits

- Creates a broad-based collaborative effort to effectively reduce plastic bag litter Countywide.
- Incorporates supermarket and retail store employee training and public education to meet the goals of the Program.
- Establishes performance goals and a measurement methodology to demonstrate Program success, using the State's existing reporting framework (established by AB 2449) to obtain data.
- Maximizes regional benefit while minimizing duplicative efforts by local municipalities.