

PLASTIC BAGS PENALIZED IN CHINA

Flimsiest banned as of June 1, stores must charge for thicker ones

The Associated Press

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BEIJING - Making good on a promise made in January, China is becoming the latest country to ban free plastic bags, part of a government-led campaign to cut down on waste and help the environment.

The nationwide measure that goes into effect Sunday eliminates the flimsiest bags and forces stores to charge for others.

Beijing has promised to hold a green Olympic Games this summer, giving extra impetus to a number of environmental policies and projects. Officials have vowed to cut down on the "white pollution" of discarded bags that choke China's cities, farms and waterways.

The China Plastics Processing Industry Association estimates the measure will reduce the amount of plastic bags used by a third from 1.6 million tons a year. The Chinese now use 3 billion bags every day, according to the group, and they are virtually indestructible, taking years to break down and commonly ending up in China's clogged landfills.

Yu Chuanjing, a college student interning at an investment company in Beijing, said he didn't have the discipline to change his habits alone.

"Of course, there'll be trouble at the beginning, but it is a good policy in the long run," Yu said while buying onions at a grocery store. "It is everyone's duty to protect the environment."

Will it work beyond Olympics?

Sun Peng, a project manager for a company that makes circuit boards, said at a fruit and vegetable roadside store that the measure is mainly for the Olympics and it will be important to see what happens afterward.

"It will be inconvenient, no question about it," he said. "But we advocated for a green games, didn't we? We can't have plastic bags everywhere."

Under the rules, businesses nationwide will be prohibited from manufacturing, selling or using bags less than 0.00098 inches thick, according to the order issued by the State Council, China's Cabinet. More durable plastic bags will still be permitted for sale by markets and shops.

"Plastic bags undoubtedly are more convenient for consumers, but at the same time they also greatly endanger the environment," Commerce Ministry official Men Xiaowei said in a rare online question-and-answer session Thursday about the policy.

He said 3 percent to 5 percent of the weight of landfills is made up of plastic waste from households, the majority of which are plastic bags.

Bags also energy users

With oil prices up more than 42 percent since December, the rule is also an attempt to cut energy use. It takes 37 million barrels of crude oil a year to make all the bags needed for China.

Owners of local fruit stalls and supermarkets said the measure would not affect their business, as they mostly only plan to charge a couple of cents for plastic bags.

Paris-based supermarket Carrefour, China's biggest retailer, said it would charge 2 to 14 cents for the plastic bags. It also sells cloth bags.

A similar ban in Ireland cut the number of bags used by 90 percent, according to Waste Watch, a UK-based environmental non profit group. Several African nations have set thickness requirements that have effectively banned the flimsy thin bags that float in the air.

In the U.S., grocers have encouraged consumers to recycle bags or bring their own, and a few states have enacted bans on free plastic bags.

LAWMAKERS TO CHARGE FOR PLASTIC BAG USE

In Effort to Curb Pollution, California Works on Bill to Charge for Plastic Bags

By RUSSELL GOLDMAN

June 5, 2008



Plastic bags are so common in our daily lives that we barely give them any notice. Ubiquitous as they are, some California lawmakers believe the bags are a menace and they want to make shoppers pay 25 cents for each one they use to tote their goods home.

The California Assembly recently passed a bill that would give retailers three years to reduce their use of one-time shopping bags, both plastic and paper, by 70 percent. Beginning in 2011, shops that had not met and maintained the reduction requirement would then charge shoppers a quarter per bag.

California already has the only plastic bag recycling program in the country -- in which retailers collect used bags in bins -- and some cities, including San Francisco, Oakland and Malibu, have banned their use outright.

China banned plastic bags in January and Bangladesh has outlawed them since 2002, which might come as a surprise, given that neither country is known for its progressive environmental policies. Ireland has a similar fee-for-bags program, charging around 30 cents each.

Assemblyman Lloyd Levine, a Democrat from Van Nuys who sponsored the bill, told ABC News that reducing the number of plastic bags is good for the environment and the economy.

"Plastic bags are a huge problem, whether people realize it or not. In California, we use 19 billion plastic bags a year. You need 4,000 barrels of oil to produce that many bags," he said.

The lightweight bags take centuries to biodegrade. They end up caught in trees, strewn across beaches and stuck in drain pipes. Though inexpensive to manufacture, dealing with their cleanup costs the state millions of dollars a year, Levine said.

"The state spends \$300 million cleaning up bags -- getting them off the beaches and out of the storm drains."

Levine, who also introduced the recycling bin law three years ago, said lawmakers and citizens understand the problems plastic bags pose more now than they did then.

"I introduced the recycling bill three years ago and got a lot of pushback. At that time, only about 2 percent of plastic bags were recycled. Since then we've seen a 100 percent increase in bag recycling, but that means we only recycle 4 percent of all bags. It's either an impressive number, or still leaves much to be desired, depending on how you look at it."

In the beginning, few legislators understood why plastic bags were problematic, he added. Now, most understand they are a problem. "Now we argue over the solution," Levine said.

The problem affects California communities and the world as a whole, community activists and environmentalists told ABC News.

"The issue in California is not just aesthetic," said Mark Murray, executive director of Californians Against Waste. "The coast is facing a mandate from the (Environmental Protection Agency) to eliminate storm drain trash. These communities need to eliminate the source of storm drain trash or face the wrath of the EPA. Plastic bags gum up the works, blocking the traps and filters that clean the storm drain runoff before it goes into the bays and ocean," he said.

"The communities end up spending millions of dollars on clean up, when they can, instead, spend nothing to get rid of the bags. It is as economically sound as it is environmentally sound," Murray said.

Environmentalists say the little satisfaction that bags give consumers does not outweigh the toll they have on the environment.

One-thousand miles off the coast of California, a vortex of ocean currents forms a vast swath of sea twice the size of Texas, known as the Northern Pacific Geyser.

There is six times more plastic than plankton in Geyser, and it is permeating the food chain, said Stephanie Barger, executive director of the Earth Resource Foundation.

"There is not only more plastic than plankton, but there is plastic in the plankton, and there is plastic in the fish that we eat," she said.

She said bag use needed to be curtailed because they're inherently difficult to recycle. The 25 cent fee in California is a small price to pay compared to the expense of a clean up.

"You think you're getting those bags for free, but in nature, nothing is free. For 30 minutes of use, we end up having to destroy rainforests in Indonesia to get the natural gas, and dealing with the politics of the Middle East to get oil and then we still have the problem of the waiting more than 100 years for the bags to breakdown."

All of the Republican members of the Assembly voted against Levine's bill, which still needs to be passed the Senate and signed by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger to become law.

Republicans opposed the measure, arguing it would add hundreds of dollars a year to the grocery bills when California families already feeling the pinch of high food and gas prices. "Hard-working Californians are struggling to pay record-high prices for food and gas; the last thing they need are higher taxes," said Assembly Republican Leader Mike Villines of Fresno in a statement. "This bill will hurt families by forcing shoppers to pay a new tax on every paper and plastic bag they use at grocery stores, making grocery bills even more expensive."

Under the current bill, the fees collected will be used by the businesses to invest in local environmental projects. But according to Levine that provision is "place holder" and the bill will be re-written before being voted on by the Senate to ensure the communities control the money collected from the 25-cent fees.

MB HOLDS OFF ON PLASTIC BAG BAN

By Andrea Woodhouse, Staff Writer for Daily Breeze

[Article Launched: 06/05/2008 12:10:37 AM PDT](#)

A last-minute litigation threat has forced Manhattan Beach to temporarily bag its proposal to ban plastic bags in town.

Poised Tuesday to become the first South Bay community to outlaw point-of-sale plastic bags, Manhattan city leaders opted instead to investigate the possible environmental effects of such a ban and take up the issue again later this month.

Save the Plastic Bag Coalition, a recently formed group of companies that claim to be affected by such an ordinance, announced Tuesday afternoon its intention to sue if Manhattan Beach moved forward with the ban without further study required by the California Environmental Quality Act.

"The purpose of CEQA is to make absolutely sure that cities like Manhattan Beach fully research and analyze the facts and evidence before making decisions that affect the environment, rather than relying on poorly researched and erroneous staff reports," Stephen Joseph, a Tiburon, Calif.-based lawyer representing the group, wrote to the city in a nine-page letter dissecting the proposed ordinance.

Joseph did not return telephone messages Wednesday.

Manhattan Beach city officials took Joseph's argument seriously, largely because of the success of another group, the Coalition to Support Plastic Bag Recycling, in halting a similar ban recently in Oakland.

In its suit, the coalition alleged that Oakland did not fully study the effects of a prohibition, specifically that outlawing plastic bags would increase paper bag use and production.

An Alameda County Superior Court judge's April ruling that Oakland indeed did not sufficiently study the ban put a dent in Manhattan Beach's plan to declare an exemption under the act, said City Attorney Bob Wadden.

Instead, Manhattan Beach in coming weeks will study the possible environmental consequences of such a ban, likely leading to a finding of no negative effects or some efforts to offset any consequences, Wadden said.

"It doesn't mean we won't get sued, but it makes it much more likely that we would win," he said. "We took their threat seriously and we don't want to get involved in litigation."

City leaders will discuss a ban again in coming weeks, and, judging by the council's enthusiasm Tuesday, it appeared likely the council later would allow such a ban.

Staffers proposed a series of reasons why petroleum-based plastic bags should be banned in town: Los Angeles County research showed less than 5 percent of the 600 bags the average county resident uses each year are recycled, officials said.

Easily windblown, the lightweight bags frequently litter streets and landscaping, clog storm drains and migrate to the city's picturesque shoreline, staffers said.

"There's no reason not to have a ban in place," Councilman Jim Aldinger said.

Said Mayor Richard Montgomery: "We're being leaders, not followers."

Staffers expected a high compliance rate in the affluent city, and the idea largely has been received positively by local business owners, city officials said.

Several community members spoke in favor of the ban Tuesday.

"We now know better, and it's time to act on this knowledge," resident Suzanne Kretschmer said. "We're at a crucial turning point, and we need to do something to stop the damage to our planet."

The California Grocers Association opposed Manhattan's ban, saying it would only encourage excessive use of paper bags and hardship to grocers.

"We believe the best solution for solving this problem is encouraging consumers to use less carry-out bags," said representative Samantha Martinez. "We believe a piecemeal approach will lead to little environmental gain."

The proposed ban would have given Manhattan Beach grocery stores, food vendors, restaurants, pharmacies and city facilities six months to phase out plastic bags; other retail establishments would have a year.

Manhattan would have also launched a large-scale education campaign about the ban, and enforced it through written citations.

Had it approved the prohibition Tuesday, Manhattan Beach would have become the first South Bay city to outlaw plastic bags.

In the region, Malibu banned them last month, and Santa Monica is set to approve an ordinance similar to Malibu's later this month.

The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors in January created a program that partners with grocery stores, retailers and environmental groups to voluntarily reduce onetime use of plastic bags by 30 percent by 2010, and 65 percent by 2015.

San Francisco has also nixed non-biodegradable plastic bags, but allows for compostable sacks.

REGION: PLASTIC-BAG RECYCLING LAW CLEARS ASSEMBLY, HEADS FOR SENATE

By DAVE DOWNEY - Staff Writer for North County Times
Last modified Sunday, June 1, 2008 6:22 PM PDT

In a little more than two years, shoppers could find themselves paying a quarter for every plastic or paper bag they use to bag groceries.

Assemblyman Lloyd Levine, D-Los Angeles, wrote a law earlier that required stores to set up containers for shoppers to drop off old plastic bags last summer. In a telephone interview Friday, he said most of the 7,000 stores statewide covered by the legislation have complied, and the recycling rate has doubled from 2 percent to 4 percent.

But Levine said California can and must do much better and it is time to pass a law "with some teeth in it."

So, this year, Levine is sponsoring legislation to require stores to slash their use of plastic bags 70 percent, as measured by weight, by 2010 ---- or begin charging 25 cents for each bag they issue starting Jan. 1, 2011. That's the basic thrust of his Assembly Bill 2058, which passed the Assembly last Wednesday on a 42-31 party-line vote, with majority Democrats pushing it through.

Beth Willon, a spokeswoman for the lawmaker, said the bill now goes to the Senate where it will be heard by the Environmental Quality Committee.

Levine said he expects strong opposition from Republicans there, too, though he believes the legislation has a good chance of passing.

The bill is another major California environmental initiative.

Area residents long have been accustomed to recycling their aluminum, glass and plastic beverage containers, as well as their newspapers and cardboard products. And they are warming to the idea of returning their outdated computers and cell phones.

Now, Levine wants them to focus attention on the need to recycle those plastic grocery bags.

However, conservative lawmakers say the legislation is the wrong approach to another aspect of California's litter problem.

Assembly Republicans voted against it because, they said, the bill would add hundreds of dollars to the family budgets of Californians at a time when the economy is teetering on, if not already in, recession.

"Hard-working Californians are struggling to pay record-high prices for food and gas," said Assembly Republican Leader Mike Villines of Fresno. "The last thing they need is higher taxes. This bill will hurt families by forcing shoppers to pay a new tax on every paper and plastic bag they use at grocery stores."

But Levine countered that families can choose not to pay the fees.

"Call my office," he said. "I will give you a reusable bag. You will not have to pay the fee. It's as simple as that."

And Levine discounted the notion that toting a reusable bag to the store would be a burden.

"It's not like you're going to have to drag an elephant into the store," he said. "I know it sounds revolutionary. But give it a try."

Some stores are already gearing up for what would amount to a wholesale shopping cultural shift.

At Henry's Marketplace in Poway, for example, reusable canvas bags that retail for \$4.99 already are being sold and less expensive models are on the way, said Aimee Della Bitta, a spokeswoman for the store.

And she said Henry's Marketplace pays customers a nickel when they return with old plastic bags to reload with groceries.

"We are definitely in line with trying to get our customers to reuse their bags," Della Bitta said.

Tiffany Moffatt, a spokeswoman for Wal-Mart in Sacramento, said the big retail chain's California stores have plastic-bag recycling receptacles and sell cloth reusable bags for \$1 apiece. But she said the company has no position on the bill.

The bill covers stores that sell grocery and pharmaceutical products, and consequently would apply to Wal-Mart and Rite Aid stores as well as grocers, Levine said. It would not, however, apply to home improvement stores such as Home Depot.

Mo Hamida, a worker at the San Marcos Market, said the 25-cent-per-bag proposal sounded extreme.

"It's just one more thing that we have to brush off as the cost of living in California, I guess," Hamida said. "It's just another hoop for us to go through. But I think it's pretty ridiculous. We do have to save the earth. But come on, a quarter per bag if it (the 70 percent target) doesn't happen?"

GOP members in the Assembly suggested the quarter-per-bag charge is out of line considering that it only costs a few cents to make one.

Levine suggested Republicans have missed the point.

"The idea isn't to reflect the cost of the bag," Levine said. "What is a cigarette tax? Does it reflect the cost of cigarettes? No. Does a speeding ticket reflect the cost of speeding? No. What we're trying to do is change behavior."

And Levine said there is plenty of reason for trying to do that.

He cited state statistics that nearly 150,000 tons of plastics bags are thrown into landfills annually. And he said a survey of trash picked up along the Los Angeles River found that 40 percent of it, as measured by volume, amounted to all types of plastic shopping bags.

Levine said Californians use nearly 20 billion bags a year, with each shopper using an average of 555.

"We're talking about a very serious problem and, hopefully, a very significant part of the solution," he said.

And, by the way, he said, he's not attempting to reopen the paper-vs.-plastic debate, noting that a shift to paper bags would mean cutting down many more trees.

"We want to make sure that we don't shove people from one to the other," Levine said. "It's not paper vs. plastic. It's neither. It's 'I brought my own.'"

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PLASTIC BAG UPDATE

Each year, six billion plastic carryout bags are consumed in Los Angeles County. Littering highways, floating down waterways, and clogging catch basins, plastic bags have a significant negative impact on the environment and our

resident's quality of life. According to the California Integrated Waste Management Board, plastic bags make up only 0.4 percent of the overall landfill disposal waste stream, but can account for as much as 25 percent of the litter stream, an immensely disproportionate negative impact. Less than 5% of these bags are recycled.

On April 17, 2007, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors instructed the Department of Public Works to investigate the issue of polyethylene plastic bag and paper sack consumption in the County, including the pros and cons of adopting a policy similar to San Francisco's ban of non-biodegradable bags. Based on stakeholder feedback from environmental groups, industry, and community members, the County compiled a thorough staff report with a menu of options for the Board of Supervisors to consider.

On January 22, 2008, the Board of Supervisors adopted a policy calling for the development of a suite of programs and incentives in conjunction with industry, manufacturers, environmental groups, residents, and local government. Large supermarkets with gross annual sales of \$2 million or more and retail stores of over 10,000 square feet including pharmacies would be required to meet two plastic bag reductions benchmarks: 30% consumption reduction by 2010, and 65% by 2013. If either of these benchmarks is not met, a ban on plastic bags will be implemented. Simultaneously, the program will be expanded to cover other stores distributing plastic carryout bags, while the County will be reaching out to all 88 cities to participate in the program and adopt the disposal reduction goals as a coordinated effort to make a dent in the plastic bag litter problem.

In order to encourage residents to reduce plastic bag use, the County participated in many local promotional events including giveaways of the popular "Brag About My Bag" reusable bags. Together with Heal the Bay and Cities throughout Los Angeles County, the County endorsed December 20, 2007 as "A Day Without A Bag." This wildly successful event encouraged shoppers to ditch their plastic shopping bags in favor of reusable bags. Such efforts will be incorporated into the Countywide campaign to increase recycling of plastic bags, promote reusable bags, and significantly reduce plastic bag litter. To learn more about this Policy and its programs, visit Los Angeles County's Environmental Resources website at www.888CleanLA.com or Coby Skye, Public Works, at (626) 458-5163, M - Th 7:00 am to 5:30 pm.



Pomona Business Monthly 5

LOS ANGELES TIMES
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Malibu to require big stores to cease using plastic bags within 6 months

By TAMI ABDOLLAH
Times Staff Writer

An ordinance unanimously adopted by Malibu's City Council this week will soon make plastic bags a thing of the past among its 13,000 residents and four supermarkets.

The measure will apply to all retailers, including grocery stores, restaurants, pharmacies and city facilities, which will have about six months to comply, or face a fine of up to \$1,000. Smaller vendors will have up to a year.

The action follows a number of other efforts in California to ban plastic bags. In February, Santa Monica's City Council voted to draft an ordinance that would ban plastic bags and to consider a fee for paper bags.

In March 2007, San Francisco's County Board of Supervisors voted to ban non-biodegradable plastic bags at supermarket chains with more than \$2 million in annual sales and other major retailers. It was believed to be the first such ban in the country.

Environmental groups hailed Malibu's ordinance as a model that they hoped others would emulate, to keep the bags from clogging storm drains and drifting to sea, where they can kill marine life.

"Even though there's only a couple grocery stores in Malibu, the average American is using over 600 plastic bags annually, and so, it makes a big difference," said Sarah Abramson, director of coastal resources for Heal the Bay, a regional environmental group. "When cities like Malibu take action on these types of issues, it can be held up as a leader for other cities to move forward with similar action."

Californians use about 19 billion plastic shopping bags annually, and Los Angeles County residents account for about a third of that, according to Heal the Bay. It costs California taxpayers about \$25 million a year to collect and dispose of plastic bags, according to Californians Against Waste.

"If you live down here and you take a walk down the beach, or you're a surfer, the concern is that we're polluting

our waters, ruining our beaches with this pollution," said Malibu Councilwoman Sharon Barovsky.

Dave Heylen, a spokesman for the California Grocers Assn., a trade group for the food industry, said the ban skirted the real issue: trying to get consumers to change their habits and switch to reusable bags. He said most stores would probably just use paper instead of plastic.

"Our contention is, instead of shifting bag use from one type to another, that we actually put together an effective plan that would [get] these bags out of the waste stream," Heylen said.

Last summer, a statewide recycling bill went into effect that requires large California grocery stores and pharmacies to collect and recycle plastic bags, and to sell reusable bags.

At the Monday night meeting, Malibu Mayor Pamela Conley Ulich asked the city's staff to study imposing a fee on paper bags to encourage people to bring reusable bags.

tami.abdollah@latimes.com

4/09/08

Danny Westneat

Bags a tiny fraction of sea trash



Danny Westneat
Seattle Times staff columnist
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I figured if anyone would jump for joy at Seattle's crusade against plastic bags, it would be the flotsam guy.

Maybe you've heard of Curt Ebbesmeyer. He's considered one of the world's leading oceanic garbologists (though, as he jokes, how many can there be?). From his basement in Ravenna, he uses beachcomber reports to track the comings and goings of floating sea trash. Like dozens of rat-poison canisters that washed onto Washington shores this spring. Or computer monitors, which "always float screen up, eyes peering out of the waves."

An oceanographer, he also named the Earth's most shameful man-made feature, the "great Eastern garbage patch." That's a Texas-sized soup of plastic junk, swirling in floating clouds across the Pacific between us and Hawaii.

It's such a huge and indestructible soiling of the sea that Ebbesmeyer feels bad he dubbed it only a "patch."

"It's trash that will never go away, stretching across the water farther than you can see," Ebbesmeyer says. "It would absolutely horrify you to see it."

So when I asked him what he thought of Seattle's plan to crack down on disposable grocery bags, I was surprised when he sort of shrugged.

"It's OK, but plastic bags are not the real problem," he said. "It's one little battle out of a million. Go look at what the ocean carries in on a given day. You'll see what I mean."

Last month, Ebbesmeyer held a "Dash for Trash" in Ocean Shores. In two hours, 50 people collected an astonishing 2,000 pounds of junk from the beach. Almost all of it was plastic — from fishing floats to shotgun shells to dolls from Japan. Yet very little of it was the plastic bags targeted by Seattle.

I did my own garbology "dig" at low tide in Seattle's Myrtle Edwards Park. In half an hour poking along 300 yards of shoreline, I found a demoralizing 173 pieces of trash.

Take out the wood (paintbrush), the metal (beer cans, foil wrappers) and the miscellaneous (earplugs, nicotine patches, ropes, a corncob, an orange traffic cone), and I was left with 137 pieces of plastic.

Top item, by far: Plastic bottles. Followed by plastic bottle caps. Then plastic lids and plastic cups. Plus a slew of plastic food packaging.

Number of plastic grocery or drugstore bags? One.

The plan is to levy a 20-cent-per-bag fee on both plastic and paper bags, in hopes we'll all stop using them. That's fine, Ebbesmeyer told me. But it's such a tiny slice of the global plastic problem it's scarcely worth commenting on.

"If the mayor really wants to get on the stick, he should go after plastic bottles. Or plastic wrapping of food products. Or how about a tax or a ban on petroleum-based plastic, period?"

Now some of you have written to say the mayor, for proposing even this mild intrusion into our lives, is an eco-fascist who'll pry your bags only from your cold, dead fingers.

But take it from the flotsam guy. He has seen a seabird with 700 bits of plastic in its stomach. He has sampled seawater in which plastic particles outnumber plankton six to one. He has gazed into the planet's plasticizing heart of darkness.

From out there, this bag flap is a drop in the ocean.

Danny Westneat's column appears Wednesday and Sunday. Reach him at 206-464-2086 or dwestneat@seattletimes.com.

TheStar.com | Ontario | No plastic bag ban for Ontario



RON BULL/TORONTO STAR FILE PHOTO

Plastic shopping bags are widely used at stores throughout the Greater Toronto Area.

Jan 08, 2008 02:29 PM

ROB FERGUSON

QUEEN'S PARK BUREAU

JOHN SPEARS

CITY HALL BUREAU

Ontario won't follow China's move to reduce pollution by banning plastic shopping bags, Premier Dalton McGuinty said today.

However, during a morning visit to Kitchener, the premier also said the Chinese plan is a reminder that the west should be "rethinking" its reliance on the bags.

"They've borne the regular brunt of criticism from much of the western world," added McGuinty, who has been critical of China's heavy reliance on dirty coal-fired power plants.

"Here's a case where they're demonstrating they can in fact be leaders."

Ontario announced a plan last year to work with industry on reducing plastic bag use, but McGuinty said today that the province isn't considering an outright ban at the moment.

"We're going to continue to move forward on the steps we have in place," he told reporters after announcing an interest-free, \$2.85-million loan to a Kitchener plant that makes airplane landing gear.

McGuinty's comments came after China announced a crackdown on plastic bags, banning production of ultra-thin bags and forbidding its supermarkets and shops from handing out free carriers from June 1.

China's cabinet said in a notice published today that the country uses too many of plastic bags and fails to dispose of them properly, wasting valuable oil and littering the country.

In Toronto, Mayor David Miller noted the city doesn't have as much authority as the Chinese government.

"We don't have the legal ability to ban in-store packaging," Miller told reporters today. "We are looking at the plastic bag issue from our 70 per cent diversion strategy."

"I think Torontonians and businesses, particularly the big supermarkets, are ready to move away from plastic bags," Miller noted.

"Packaging's a big issue," he added. "There's way too much packaging, it's a huge contribution to landfill, and the city has several positions trying to minimize that."

The chair of Toronto's works committee said city councillors and bureaucrats will present a plan this spring on how to reduce the use of plastic shopping bags, as well as other consumer packaging that's added in the store. In addition to bags, that includes items like hot drink cups and dishes that hold take-out food.

Councillor Glenn De Baeremaeker called a year ago for a 90 per cent reduction in the use of plastic shopping bags. As a result, the city struck a working group with retailers and food industry representatives to look at the issue.

Ontarians use about 2.5 billion plastic bags a year, an average of four a week per person.

"We're looking at all types of in-store packaging," De Baeremaeker said in an interview today.

De Baeremaeker explained his committee is considering a range of options, including charging fees for packaging.

"Plastic is a big one; clamshell containers that people take their lasagna and salad out with; coffee cups," he said. "We're looking at all garbage and figuring out how we can get it into a blue box and how we can produce less of it."

"In Ireland, where they introduced a 20 cent per bag levy, they've had a 90 per cent reduction in the use of plastic bags," he said. "I think that's an excellent model. It's one very good option the city is investigating, and may in the end follow.

"We're still looking at the pros and cons of everything. But our goal is to divert 70 per cent of waste from the landfill site. How do you do that? We have to give people the right economic signals."

The Environment and Plastics Industry Council, which is a standing committee of the Canadian Plastics Industry Association, believes that China's ban should not be applied in this country.

Spokesperson Cathy Cirko said in an interview today that "Canada is different from China. We have an infrastructure for recycling here. Shopping bags are recycled and highly recyclable. And we have an effort right across the country on using plastic shopping bags in a very wise manner."

What China should be doing is building an infrastructure on recycling, she said. She said that although a small town in Manitoba, Leaf Rapids, has introduced a ban on plastic bags, "this is not a practical solution for other parts of Canada. That's a town of about 500 people," she said.

Cirko said their polls show that Canadians are recycling plastic bags in growing numbers and the industry stakeholders are working to improve education and recycling efforts.

"What people forget is these bags are practical and they're terribly convenient," she said. "We have to keep on the path we're on."

Cirko said people can log on to www.myplasticbags.ca to find the closest location where plastic bags can be recycled.

City joins county program to reduce plastic bag use

■ Just short of a ban, city encourages use of reusable bags

by Sascha Bush

If green is the new black, then the reusable canvas shopping tote is the new "it" handbag.

Or it will be, thanks to a countywide program that encourages savvy shoppers to carry reusable bags instead of choosing paper or plastic.

The Redondo Beach City Council approved a resolution this week to reduce the city's use of plastic shopping bags by joining the Los Angeles Department of Public Works' aggressive bag-reduction program, bent on a 65-percent reduction in plastic bag use in five years' time.

"This is another opportunity to take some environmental action here," said Councilman Steven Diels during the May 13 meeting, when the topic first crossed the council's agenda.

Representatives from the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works were present last week and returned again Tuesday night to explain the opt-in program that could, with dedicated participation from local municipalities, significantly reduce the number of single-use plastic grocery bags that end up as trash each year.

"In L.A. County alone we go through 6 billion plastic bags every single year," explained Coby Skye, from the Los Angeles DPW. "They are designed to last a

few minutes, but they exist in the environment for centuries. The majority of them end up in our landfills, our trees and our waterways, impacting our marine wildlife."

Skye joked that the plastic bags "make great kites" as they catch the wind and are blown into trees or tangle around chain link fences, but that they, too, comprise 25 percent of all litter, litter that costs Los Angeles County tens of millions of dollars a year to clean up.

The county program went into full force in January, pressing hard for in-store recycling, and for the sale and use of inexpensive reusable shopping totes.

Statewide efforts to reduce the number of single-use plastic grocery bags that end up in the trash have also been implemented.

The state Legislature passed AB 2449 last July, which mandated that all supermarkets provide collection bins to recycle the plastic bags, but the effort didn't go far enough to curb the bags from littering streets, trees and clogging waterways.

Skye said that new legislation, AB 2058, would place a 25-cent fee on each paper and plastic grocery bag used by consumers, thereby hopefully encouraging shoppers to use reusable canvas or mesh shopping totes versus paying extra for disposable bags.

Cities that have attempted an outright

(Please turn to Page 44)

R.B. plastic bags

(Continued from Page 14)

ban on bags, such as Oakland and Santa Monica, have had their bans challenged and overturned. Oakland's ordinance banning plastic bags was overturned by the city's superior court, mainly because it did not comply with California Environmental Quality Act standards. Oakland must now provide a full environmental impact report if it wants to impose the ban. Santa Monica and Malibu may see similar difficulties keeping with CEQA standards.

The City Council unanimously passed the resolution to join the program without discussion May 20.

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MAY 23, 2008

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MAY 5, 2008

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MARCH 28, 2008

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2007—08 REGULAR SESSION

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 2058

Introduced by Assembly Members Levine, Brownley, and Davis

February 19, 2008

An act to amend Sections 42250, 42251, 42252, 42253, 42254, and 42255 of, to add Section 42252.5 to, to add Article 3 (commencing with Section 42260) to Chapter 5.1 of Part 3 of Division 30 of, to add headings as Article 1 (commencing with Section 42250) and Article 2 (commencing with Section 42251) to Chapter 5.1 of Part 3 of Division 30 of, and to repeal Sections 42256 and 42257 of *Section 42256 of, and to repeal and add Section 42257 of*, the Public Resources Code, relating to recycling.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

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

(1) 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 70% in the

number of plastic carryout bags provided by the store during a specified period. The bill would require a store that is not complying with the diversion rate requirements to ~~sell~~ *provide a plastic carryout bag* ~~to customers~~ *a customer* for not less than \$0.25 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 by the store to implement specified plastic carryout bag recycling, cleanup, and waste reduction programs.

This bill would, on and after July 1, 2011, permit a store to provide a paper carryout bag to a customer only if the store charges the customer not less than \$0.25 per bag. A store charging for these paper carryout bags would be required to demonstrate that any revenue collected, excluding the cost of the bags and a reasonable financial return, is used by the store to implement specified paper carryout bag recycling, cleanup, and waste reduction programs.

(2) Under existing law, the California Integrated Waste Management Board administers laws related to waste management.

This bill would require the California Integrated Waste Management Board to administer and enforce the plastic carryout bag and paper carryout bag provisions. The bill would require a store that imposes a charge for a paper carryout bag or a plastic carryout bag to pay a specified fee to the board for deposit in the Integrated Waste Management Account and would authorize the board, upon appropriation by the Legislature, to expend those moneys for purposes of administering and enforcing the plastic carryout bag and paper carryout bag provisions.

~~(2)~~

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

This bill would delete the repeal date.

This bill would make clarifying and conforming changes.

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 Sections 42252.5 and 42260
- 4 of the Public Resources Code will mitigate the environmental,

1 public health, and other public-financed impacts caused by the use
 2 of plastic and paper bags by offsetting the costs of programs to
 3 prevent the littering of plastic and paper carryout bags, cleaning
 4 up the litter caused by plastic and paper carryout bags, and
 5 encouraging the reduction of the use of plastic and paper carryout
 6 bags.

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

17 (b) It is the intent of the Legislature that the fees that are
 18 imposed pursuant to Sections 42252.5 and 42260 of the Public
 19 Resources Code be consistent with *Sinclair Paint Co. v. State Bd.*
 20 of Equalization (1997) 15 Cal.4th 866.

21 SEC. 2. The heading of Article 1 (commencing with Section
 22 42250) is added to Chapter 5.1 of Part 3 of Division 30 of the
 23 Public Resources Code, to read:

24
 25 Article 1. Definitions
 26

27 SEC. 3. Section 42250 of the Public Resources Code is
 28 amended to read:

29 42250. For purposes of this chapter, the following definitions
 30 shall apply:

31 (a) "Manufacturer" means the producer of a plastic carryout
 32 bag sold to a store.

33 (b) "Operator" means a person in control of, or having daily
 34 responsibility for, the daily operation of a store, which may include,
 35 but is not limited to, the owner of the store.

36 (c) "Paper carryout bag" means a paper carryout bag provided
 37 by a store to a customer at the point of sale.

38 (d) "Plastic carryout bag" means a plastic carryout bag provided
 39 by a store to a customer at the point of sale.

40 (e) "Reusable bag" means either of the following:

1 (1) A bag made of cloth or other machine washable fabric that
2 has handles.

3 (2) A durable plastic bag with handles that is at least 2.25 mils
4 thick and is specifically designed and manufactured for multiple
5 reuse.

6 (f) “Store” means a retail establishment that provides plastic or
7 paper carryout bags to its customers as a result of the sale of a
8 product and that meets either of the following requirements:

9 (1) Meet the definition of a “supermarket” as found in Section
10 14526.5.

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

17 SEC. 4. The heading of Article 2 (commencing with Section
18 42251) is added to Chapter 5.1 of Part 3 of Division 30 of the
19 Public Resources Code, to read:

20

21

Article 2. Plastic Bags

22

23 SEC. 5. Section 42251 of the Public Resources Code is
24 amended to read:

25 42251. (a) The operator of a store shall establish an at-store
26 recycling program pursuant to this article that provides an
27 opportunity for a customer of the store to return to the store clean
28 plastic carryout bags.

29 (b) A retail establishment that does not meet the definition of a
30 store, as specified in Section 42250, and that provides plastic
31 carryout bags to customers at the point of sale may also adopt an
32 at-store recycling program, as specified in this article.

33 SEC. 6. Section 42252 of the Public Resources Code is
34 amended to read:

35 42252. An at-store recycling program provided by the operator
36 of a store shall include all of the following:

37 (a) A plastic carryout bag provided by the store shall have
38 printed or displayed on the bag, in a manner visible to a consumer,
39 the words “PLEASE RETURN TO A PARTICIPATING STORE
40 FOR RECYCLING.”

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

5 (c) All plastic bags collected by the store shall be collected,
6 transported, and recycled in a manner that does not conflict with
7 the local jurisdiction's source reduction and recycling element,
8 pursuant to Chapter 2 (commencing with Section 41000) and
9 Chapter 3 (commencing with Section 41300) of Part 2.

10 (d) The store shall maintain records describing the collection,
11 transport, and recycling of plastic bags collected for a minimum
12 of three years and shall make the records available to the board or
13 the local jurisdiction, upon request, to demonstrate compliance
14 with this article.

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

20 SEC. 7. Section 42252.5 is added to the Public Resources Code,
21 to read:

22 42252.5. (a) Except as provided in subdivision (c), on and
23 after July 1, 2011, a store shall not provide a plastic carryout bag
24 to a customer unless the store demonstrates to the board that, in
25 comparison to the number of plastic carryout bags provided by the
26 store to customers and subjected to diversion in the 2007 calendar
27 year, at least 70 percent more plastic carryout bags provided by
28 the store to customers during the 12-month period ending on
29 December 31, 2010, and annually thereafter, have been subjected
30 to diversion, as described in subdivision (d).

31 (b) If a store does not comply with subdivision (a), the store may
32 provide a plastic carryout bag to a customer only if the store
33 charges the customer not less than twenty-five cents (\$0.25) per
34 bag.

35 (c) A store charging customers for plastic carryout bags pursuant
36 to subdivision (b) shall demonstrate that any revenue collected,
37 excluding the cost of the plastic carryout bags, *the amount*
38 *submitted to the board pursuant to subdivision (b) of Section*
39 *42257*, and a reasonable financial return, shall be used, in
40 consultation with local communities, by the store to implement

1 plastic bag litter reduction, plastic bag cleanup, plastic bag waste
2 reduction, and plastic bag recycling activities.

3 (d) (1) Diversion, for purposes of this section, includes a
4 reduction in the volume of plastic carryout bags provided to
5 customers and an increase in the volume of plastic carryout bags
6 recycled.

7 (2) All of the following are diversion for purposes of this
8 section:

9 (A) Diversion of plastic carryout bags provided by an individual
10 store.

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

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

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

16 SEC. 8. Section 42253 of the Public Resources Code is
17 amended to read:

18 42253. The manufacturer of a plastic carryout bag shall develop
19 educational materials to encourage the reducing, reusing, and
20 recycling of plastic bags and shall make those materials available
21 to stores required to comply with this article.

22 SEC. 9. Section 42254 of the Public Resources Code is
23 amended to read:

24 42254. (a) The Legislature finds and declares that both of the
25 following matters are of statewide interest and concern:

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

28 (2) Requiring a store to conduct auditing or reporting with regard
29 to plastic carryout bags.

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

33 (1) Require a store that is in compliance with this article to
34 collect, transport, or recycle plastic carryout bags.

35 (2) Require auditing or reporting requirements that are in
36 addition to what is required by subdivision (d) of Section 42252,
37 upon a store that is in compliance with this article.

38 (c) This section does not prohibit the adoption, implementation,
39 or enforcement of a local ordinance, resolution, regulation, or rule
40 governing a curbside or drop off recycling program operated by,

1 or pursuant to a contract with, a city, county, or other public
2 agency, including any action relating to fees for the program.

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

6 SEC. 10. Section 42255 of the Public Resources Code is
7 amended to read:

8 42255. (a) A city, county, or the state may impose civil liability
9 in the amount of five hundred dollars (\$500) for the first violation
10 of this article, one thousand dollars (\$1,000) for the second
11 violation, and two thousand dollars (\$2,000) for the third and
12 subsequent violation.

13 (b) Civil penalties collected pursuant to subdivision (a) shall be
14 paid to the office of the city attorney, city prosecutor, district
15 attorney, or Attorney General, whichever office brought the action.
16 The penalties collected pursuant to this section by the Attorney
17 General may be expended by the Attorney General, upon
18 appropriation by the Legislature, to enforce this article.

19 SEC. 11. Section 42256 of the Public Resources Code is
20 repealed.

21 SEC. 12. Section 42257 of the Public Resources Code is
22 repealed.

23 SEC. 13. *Section 42257 is added to the Public Resources Code,*
24 *to read:*

25 42257. (a) *The board shall administer and enforce this article.*

26 (b) *By January 31, 2012, and quarterly thereafter, a store that*
27 *collects moneys pursuant to subdivision (b) of Section 42252.5*
28 *shall calculate the amount of moneys collected pursuant to*
29 *subdivision (b) of Section 42252.5 and shall pay a fee equal to 3*
30 *percent of that amount to the board, as follows:*

31 (1) *For the initial payment, the store shall calculate the amount*
32 *of moneys collected from July 1, 2011, to December 31, 2011,*
33 *inclusive.*

34 (2) *Thereafter, for each quarterly payment, the store shall*
35 *calculate the amount of moneys collected during the calendar*
36 *quarter.*

37 (c) *Fees submitted to the board pursuant to subdivision (b) shall*
38 *be deposited in the Integrated Waste Management Account and*
39 *may be expended by the board, upon appropriation by the*
40 *Legislature, for the purposes of subdivision (a).*

1 ~~SEC. 13.~~

2 *SEC. 14* Article 3 (commencing with Section 42260) is added
3 to Chapter 5.1 of Part 3 of Division 30 of the Public Resources
4 Code, to read:

5

6

Article 3. Paper Bags

7

8 42260. (a) On and after July 1, 2011, a store may provide a
9 paper carryout bag to a customer only if the store charges the
10 customer not less than twenty-five cents (\$0.25) per bag.

11 (b) A store charging customers for paper carryout bags pursuant
12 to this section shall demonstrate that any revenue collected,
13 excluding the cost of the paper carryout bags and a reasonable
14 financial return, shall be used, in consultation with local
15 communities, by the store to implement paper bag litter reduction,
16 paper bag cleanup, paper bag waste reduction, and paper bag
17 recycling activities.

18 (c) *The board shall administer and enforce this article.*

19 (d) *By January 31, 2012, and quarterly thereafter, a store that*
20 *collects moneys pursuant to subdivision (a) shall calculate the*
21 *amount of moneys collected pursuant to subdivision (a) and shall*
22 *pay a fee equal to 3 percent of that amount to the board, as follows:*

23 (1) *For the initial payment, the store shall calculate the amount*
24 *of moneys collected from July 1, 2011, to December 31, 2011,*
25 *inclusive.*

26 (2) *For each quarterly payment, the store shall calculate the*
27 *amount of moneys collected during the calendar quarter.*

28 (e) *Fees submitted to the board pursuant to subdivision (d) shall*
29 *be deposited in the Integrated Waste Management Account and*
30 *may be expended by the board, upon appropriation by the*
31 *Legislature, for the purposes of subdivision (c).*

O