

# California's Waste Bills: Plastic Defeated (For Now); Mattress Passed; Bottles To Senate

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Image above taken from Californians against Waste website

The most controversial of the three Waste bills before the California Assembly was voted down yesterday. Senate Bill 405, designed to implement a statewide phase-out of single use plastic bags, did not receive the 21 votes needed to pass. The measure failed by a vote of 18-17, with four abstentions.

“We are disappointed in this missed opportunity to dramatically reduce plastic pollution and waste in California, and save consumers hundreds of millions in one-time use bag costs, said Mark Murray, Executive Director of Californians against Waste. “But regardless of the outcome of this legislation this year, the fate of the plastic grocery bag is sealed—the plastic grocery bag, which only came on the scene in the 1970’s, will be extinct in California before the end of this decade. Every year when we bring this legislation forward, we have an opportunity to educate millions of consumers about the waste, hazards and costs posed by single use plastic bags. And the public is responding.”

“Switching to reusable bags is not a revolutionary concept,” commented Nathan Weaver of Environment California. “More cities are banning plastic bags each month, but unfortunately our state legislators are getting left behind on this issue.”

More than [75 California cities and counties](#) have now adopted ordinances banning single use plastic bags. State wide consumption of plastic bags has dropped 33% from 21 billion, in 2005, to around 14 billion now.

The Chairman of the American Progressive Bag Alliance, which represents the United States' plastic bag manufacturing and recycling sector, said, "A ban on 100 percent recyclable plastic bags would hurt the environment and threaten jobs. The American Progressive Bag Alliance works hard to protect American jobs in the plastic bag manufacturing and recycling industry – including 2,000 in California – and our organization has repeatedly called for an honest debate on this issue. We thank the members of the California Senate who rejected this misguided policy prescription based on unfounded stats, junk science and myths, and we hope lawmakers will continue to make responsible decisions on behalf of California's environment and economy."

As for the fate of the two other anti-waste bills voted on yesterday:

- [AB 1001](#) – designed to add "beverage container types that are currently exempt from recycling programs like aseptic and paperboard containers (juice boxes) and large juice bottles" to the list of containers that must be recycled – has been passed on to the senate.
- [The "Mattress" bill \(SB 254\)](#) passed (32-5). Mattress manufacturers have until April 1, next year, to submit a plan for the collection and recycling of old mattresses in California. In the city of Oakland, alone, between 18 and 35 mattresses are discarded every day. Bill 254 is meant to reduce the impact of illegally dumped mattresses, harness existing infrastructure for transporting used mattresses to recyclers, create jobs, and minimize costs to both government and consumers.