

# City's Ban on Single-Use Plastic Bags Now in Place

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Mayor Steven Weinberg, Dana Hills Surfrider Foundation Club member Grace Willett and Rick Erkeneff, Surfrider Foundation South Orange County Chapter chairman, hand out free reusable shopping bags at the Ocean Ranch Plaza Ralphs on April 1, the first day of the single use plastic bag ban in Dana Point. Photo by Elysia Gamo

*By Andrea Papagianis and Andrea Swayne*

The first phase of Dana Point's ban on single-use plastic shopping bags went into effect Monday, April 1.

The ordinance, approved in a 4 to 1 vote by [City Council on March 2012](#), will be implemented first on businesses with annual taxable sales exceeding \$4 million—including Ralphs, Smart & Final, Albertsons, CVS and Chevron.

Representatives from the Surfrider Foundation South Orange County Chapter set up a table outside the Ralphs supermarket in Ocean Ranch Plaza to hand out free reusable bags to shoppers.

According to chapter chairman Rick Erkeneff, who also serves on the board of directors for the South Coast Water District, Surfrider raises money during various events throughout the year and chose to show support for the city by directing some of the funds toward providing free reusable bags to shoppers, on the first day of the ban.

“This is a great day for the city of Dana Point,” Erkeneff said. “We are happy to distribute these reusable bags, no strings attached, as part of our national campaign, Rise Above Plastics and BYOB or Bring Your Own Bag.”

The group handed out about 300 bags in two hours and said they encountered only two or three naysayers.

Grace Willet, a member of the Surfrider Foundation Club at Dana Hills High School, dressed as the “bag monster” covered with 360 plastic bags, the estimated number used per capita, each year in the country.

“I feel like this ban is really important, even though it is controversial for some people. With so much plastic pollution in the environment it’s needed in order to keep the ocean well and marine animals well,” Willet said. “And it’s important to educate people on what a difference this can make for all of us.”

Mayor Steven Weinberg joined in to pass out the reusable bags, talk with residents and get a read on the acceptance of the ban on its first officially enforced day.

“I would say about 98 or 99 percent of the people who have stopped by today expressed their approval of this ban,” Weinberg said. “By and large I think people are accepting and as a cyclist I know I’ll be happy to ride around this town and not see so many plastic bags hanging in the trees, in the cactus or in the gutters.”

Plastic-bags that are used for fresh produce, unprepared meat or fish, bulk foods, newspapers, dry-cleaning and animal waste are not included in the ban. Additionally, restaurants and suppliers of take-out food are exempt. The full ban on plastic-bags for all other businesses, with taxable sales under \$4 million, is scheduled to go into effect on October 1.

In neighboring San Clemente, the possibility of a [ban on single-use plastic bags has gained traction](#). The city’s Coastal Advisory Commission is expected to make a proposal at an upcoming San Clemente City Council meeting.