

MB set to make plastic bags all but disappear

LAWS: Ban for most uses goes into effect Saturday with a true deadline of April 14.

By Carley Dryden
Staff Writer

Manhattan Beach shoppers will soon have the "paper or plastic" question answered for them.

All restaurants, food vendors, grocery stores and pharmacies must comply with the city's plastic bag ban beginning Saturday.

Enforcement, however, will not begin until April 14, giving the businesses a grace period to phase out plastic bags and purchase the required recycled content paper bags to meet ordinance requirements.

All other retail, commercial establishments and non-profit vendors will have to comply with the ordinance by July 14.

Many businesses in town



Brad Graverson Staff Photographer
A shopper leaves a Ralphs market in Manhattan Beach with a plastic bag filled with groceries — a sight that will become rarer and rarer.

have already prepared for the ban.

At the Ralphs grocery store in Manhattan Village, the checkers simply ask the customers if they are OK with bagging their groceries

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in paper, said store manager Joe Martinez.

"We're trying to get rid of plastic now, unless someone requests it," he said. "What we want is reusable bags."

Martinez said the store will post signs at the front door reminding people to bring in their reusable bags in case they left them in their car, as many customers do, he said. The store this week will begin charging for plastic bags until the enforcement date, he said. Closer to the April 14 date, he will stop ordering plastic bags.

As for the monetary difference the store will see in switching to paper: not much, Martinez said.

"There's only a few cents difference in paper bags versus plastic," he said. "But the good news is we can put more in paper than we can in plastic, so in the long run it evens out."

Sona Kalapura, the city's environmental programs manager, said some restaurants, like Subway, have already eliminated plastic bags, and others have been eliminating plastic-foam takeout containers, although the city's ban has not been in place.

"I think the business community realizes it's important to their customers to be in line with those practices so they're starting to make the change," she said.

The Manhattan Beach City Council, which has lauded the city as being at the forefront of the green movement, approved the plastic bag ban in July 2008. The city argued that the ban was environmentally prudent and would protect the ocean and city beaches for generations to come.

A month later, the ban was challenged by the Save the Plastic Bag Coalition, which argued that the city should have completed a full environmental impact report before adopting the ban.

In 2009, a Los Angeles County Superior Court judge ruled that the city had to conduct an EIR before the ban could be implemented. The city appealed that decision to the California Supreme Court.

In July, the Supreme Court unanimously ruled in the city's favor, stating, "Substantial evidence and common sense support the city's determination that its ordinance would have no significant environmental

effect. Therefore, a negative declaration was sufficient to comply with the requirements of the CA Environmental Quality Act."

Under the city ban, only recyclable paper bags or reusable

bags can be distributed to customers. Recyclable paper bags, according to the city's definition, contain no old growth fiber, are 100 percent recyclable overall and contain a minimum of 40 percent post-consumer

recycled content. The bags also must display the words "reusable" and "recyclable" in a highly visible manner.

Exempted from the ban are bags used to carry produce — either at a grocery store or farm-

ers market — and plastic bags used to cover dry clean items.

City Attorney Roxanne L. said the city expects voluntary compliance by most businesses so it will likely only give

Celebrations

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IN MEMORY



*Imogene
M. Keil*

June 4, 1929 ~ January 10, 2008

"I thought of you with love today

But that is nothing new

I thought about you yesterday

And days before that too,

I think of you in silence

I often speak your name

But all I have are memories

And your picture in a frame.

Your memories are my keepsake

With which I'll never part

God has you in His keeping

I have you in my heart."

You were a light in my life that

burns forever in my heart.

Your Loving Husband,

Paul

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