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#

11-1531

*A Letter of Support for the Ban of Single-Use Plastic Bags
In the City of Los Angeles*

Good Morning Ladies and Gentlemen,

As I'm sure you are aware, Californians use an estimated 19 billion plastic bags annuallyⁱ, 6 billion consumed in Los Angeles County aloneⁱⁱ. Less than 5% of these bags are actually recycledⁱⁱⁱ. Single-use plastic bags are currently being consumed at an alarming global rate of 500 billion plastic bags per year^{iv}. As a concerned owner of a growing Los Angeles County business, I am writing to encourage you to take to a vote, and eventually pass, a ban on single-use plastic bags in the City of Los Angeles, a solution proven effective around the world.

The City of Los Angeles already has the largest, most aggressive municipal green building plan of any large city in America^v. Now the City of Los Angeles should take the same aggressive approach and ban the use of single-use plastic bags. So many cities in California, as well as throughout the U.S., have already implemented bans on single-use plastic bags. From small cities like Manhattan Beach, Santa Monica, Calabasas and Fairfax, CA to Austin, TX, Portland, OR, Seattle, WA and more, now it's time for the City of Los Angeles to take the lead in this green movement.

The impact of the continued use of single-use plastic bags here in Los Angeles is staggering. From the incredible environmental impacts to the astounding financial impacts (projected annual cost to public agencies in California of approximately \$375 million) of the cost litter prevention, cleanup and disposal, among others, the list goes on and on^{vi}. The economic benefits of the reduction in such costs would be impactful, to say the least.

In addition to the economic benefits of a ban on single-use plastic bags, there are numerous environmental benefits. These include reduced use of oil and other natural resources for bag production, a reduction in terrestrial and marine life fatalities, a reduced burden on landfills, and cut back litter in our communities. Additionally, they help prevent pollution, save taxpayer dollars, and reduce our dependence on fossil fuels^{vii}.

As a growing Los Angeles County based business, we are investing in the local economy, utilizing a number of local vendors, services and providers that help us in our daily business activities. If a ban on single-use plastic bags were to be brought to a vote and then passed, this would have a positive impact on our industry and ultimately would create more jobs in the City of Los Angeles and beyond.

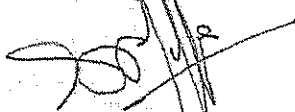


The stake-holders in this issue are, as a majority, firmly behind the single-use plastic bag ban. Local Government stands to benefit from reduced cleanup and disposal costs, non-profits will achieve their environmental goals, reusable bag makers will continue to grow their businesses and local retailers (who are among the largest job creators and the most affected by the ban) will reduce the amount of single-use bags they use. It is important to note that the industry retailers are fully behind the ban on single-use plastic bags as is their trade group, The California Grocers' Association. The amount of support is overwhelming.

As the President of Earthwise Bag Company Inc., I would like to offer our company as a resource of information on this very important and impactful issue and even offer our advocacy in person.

Thank you for your time and consideration in bringing this incredibly progressive issue to a vote.

Best Regards,



Stanley R. Joffe
President

ⁱ <http://www.cityofcalabasas.com/bags.html>

ⁱⁱ <http://www.cityofcalabasas.com/bags.html>

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.cityofcalabasas.com/bags.html>

^{iv} <http://florida.sierraclub.org/suncoast/documents/TheProblemwithPlasticBags.pdf>

^v http://www.ci.la.ca.us/mayor/stellent/groups/electedofficials/@myr_ch_contributor/documents/contributor_welb_content/lacity_004864.pdf

^{vi} <http://www.cityofcalabasas.com/bags.html>

^{vii} <http://saveourshores.org/what-we-do/banning-plastic-bags.php>

latimes.com/news/opinion/opinionla/la-ed-plastic-bag-ban-20120404,0,1856900.story

latimes.com

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Editorial

Plastic bags are an environmental menace

L.A.'s delay in banning single-use, carry-out plastic bags has put it behind dozens of other municipalities in the state. With a recycling rate of only 5%, the bags are an environmental menace that we can easily do without.

April 4, 2012

When the city of Los Angeles held off three years ago on banning single-use, carry-out plastic bags, it missed a chance to be at the forefront of environmentally responsible lawmaking in California. By the time it inexplicably delayed a vote again in December, close to 20 cities as well as Los Angeles County had prohibited stores from providing the bags. And since then, the bags have been banned in more than two dozen additional municipalities in the state.

More important, in the last three years tens of millions of plastic carry-out bags — possibly hundreds of millions — have been distributed in Los Angeles. Statewide, only about 5% of them are generally recycled. They snag on trees and bushes in the wilderness and are washed down waterways to the ocean. They are the second most common trash item found on beaches, and contribute to the giant floating garbage patch in the Pacific.

The City Council's Energy and Environment Committee should waste no more time. It should approve a ban for the full council to consider.

If there has been an upside to the delay, it's that recent talks might produce a more flexible, common-sense ordinance than the one considered in December. That proposal called for banning both plastic and paper bags, but discussions leading up to Wednesday's meeting raised the possibility of one similar to most existing ordinances, which ban plastic but prescribe a fee on paper bags, usually 10 cents apiece. It will take consumers a while to adopt the habit of carrying reusable totes for their groceries and other purchases, and they should have the option of a less environmentally damaging alternative for the times they forget.

The committee's job should be made easier by a ruling last month in Los Angeles County Superior Court in which the judge rejected a legal challenge to the county's bag ban, which applies only to unincorporated areas. The judge ruled that the fee on paper bags was not a tax, as the manufacturer of plastic bags had claimed.

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One complaint from consumers is that they have other uses for the plastic bags, especially to pick up after their dogs. But the ban would affect only the bags with handles that shoppers are commonly given at checkout stands. The smaller bags used to hold vegetables (or this newspaper) are usually recycled or at least disposed of properly, so would not be included in the ordinance, and larger, sturdier trash bags are inexpensive. Cities and even whole nations are doing just fine without the polluting carry-out bags, and so can Los Angeles.

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