

Macedonia
baptist church



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Submitted in: BOB Committee
Council File No: 11-1531
Item No: 1
Deputy: RUSZUC

April 2, 2012

Mr. Enrique C. Zaldivar, P.E.
Director
Department of Public Works
Bureau of Sanitation
Executive Office
1149 South Broadway, 9th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90015

Re: Request for Community Workshops to Discuss Proposed L.A. City "Reusable Bag Policy"

Dear Mr. Zaldivar,

I am writing with regard to the "Reusable Bag Policy" proposal that is currently being considered by the Los Angeles City Council. I understand the Bureau of Sanitation is the leading advocate for the policy and is holding "workshops" in various communities around the city to educate residents on the proposal and request feedback.

As the senior pastor of Macedonia Baptist Church in the Watts community of Los Angeles I have all too often witnessed how policymakers fail to engage citizens in the low income and minority communities of Los Angeles when they are considering policies that will actually impact those communities the most. I am concerned that the proposal to ban plastic and paper grocery and other retail carryout bags in the City is such a policy, and **the purpose of this letter is to request that the Bureau hold an informational "workshop" in or near my community so members of my congregation, and the congregations of my fellow pastors, have the opportunity to learn more about the proposal and ask important questions.**

I appreciate the Bureau's efforts to reduce litter, but believe there are a number of unintended consequences of banning disposable bags that have not been considered. For example: the poorest members of my community and even those right above the poverty line should not have to choose between buying groceries or paying for reusable bags when they shop for groceries. Three or four dollars to buy bags may not matter to a Hollywood executive, but that money could put a whole meal on the table for a family from Watts.

And while it might be easy for someone who owns a spacious sedan to store their reusable bags in their trunk day-to-day, what about those who rely on public transportation to get around? Should a mother of four carry a dozen bags with her on the bus as she shuttles between home, job #1, job #2, the grocery store, then home again? It's not practical.

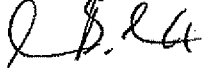
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Shane B. Scott, Pastor/Teacher

And we've heard that reusable bags can harbor bacteria and other contaminants if they aren't properly washed after each use. It is difficult to imagine the same mother of four – working two jobs and lugging around all her bags around on the bus all day – finding time to clean those bags when she needs to tend to her family. I, along with the majority of my congregation, prefer to reuse clean, recyclable disposable bags for a variety of things – and we don't have to pay extra for them.

Also, I understand that the proposal actually threatens good Los Angeles manufacturing jobs. Should the Bureau be advocating a policy that could eliminate local jobs, especially when our economy is in its current state? And, what about the convenience store owner near the L.A. City border? Won't he lose valuable business to the store just across the way that gives away free paper or plastic bags because it isn't subject to the ban?

As you can tell, I and many people in my community have a number of questions about the wisdom of the proposed "Reusable Bag Policy" and we hope to address them and others at a workshop in the near future. I am also happy to host one at my church or another convenient venue, so please kindly reply soon so we can work on scheduling a date and venue.

Sincerely,



Rev. Shane B. Scott, M. Div.

cc: Mayor Antonio R. Villaraigosa
Members, Los Angeles City Council