

CF: #11-1531



June 14, 2013

The Honorable Los Angeles City Council
Los Angeles City Hall
200 North Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

RE: COUNCIL FILE # 11-1531 SINGLE-USE CARRYOUT BAGS / CITY POLICY

Dear Councilmembers:

I am writing to express my concerns of a plastic bag ban proposal in Los Angeles. As the general manager of a plastic bag manufacturing company that employs 300 Angelenos, I understand the impacts of a ban on our product better than almost anyone out there. Unfortunately this debate has focused less on the facts and impacts to Los Angeles workers and more on misguided environmental rhetoric. The truth is that a plastic bag ban in Los Angeles will send a terrible message to companies like mine, Crown Poly, that have been proven job creators. Moreover, this ordinance will not solve the litter issue and will only turn shoppers to options that are actually worse for the environment.

Contrary to comments made by Councilmembers and Department of Public Works staff at a recent LA City hearing, a plastic bag ban in Los Angeles would risk a number of jobs. It would also send the message to the Los Angeles' manufacturing community: the city does not value jobs nor job creators. Expand elsewhere. Employ elsewhere. Unlike Chico Bags and Green Bags who import reusable bags from China, we make our bags here in Huntington Park with manufacturing workers, as well as office and sales staff that live in Los Angeles. Nearly one out of every ten Angelenos is currently unemployed and I ask that the Council considers the message that this ordinance would send to the Crown Poly family.

At a recent press conference we hosted at our facility, a longtime member of our team spoke against similar legislation that would have covered all of California. Elicia Ortiz has worked at Crown Poly for years, and relies on our continued success to provide health insurance that alleviates the financial burden that her daughter's health condition would otherwise impose. People like Elicia may not get as much press as Bette Midler, but there are 2,000 of them in California that rely on our industry to put food on the table. Elicia and 300 Angelenos like her are looking to their City Council to do the right thing.

Flawed as this legislation's message is, it is not the only problem. The little-known fact is that plastic bags are actually better for the environment than paper or reusable bags. Plastic bags were originally invented to avoid destroying trees just to carry home some groceries and emit fewer greenhouse gases throughout their lifecycles because they require significantly less energy to produce. Many of the fashionable reusable bags are actually just another form of plastic, but are made with oil, (not natural gas, like the bags that American companies like Crown Poly produce) and cannot be recycled. We import 500 million of these bags every year, faster than we can use them, meaning many of them end up in landfills. The bottom line is plastic bags are the better alternative.

Banning a product that thousands of people rely on for their livelihoods on environmental grounds is something that deserves serious thought, attention to the facts and a careful weighing of benefits and harms. When the product is actually the better environmental alternative, harming an industry like ours is flat out wrong. This ordinance will also not save on your litter budget because plastic bags are less than 1% of litter – it did not save the litter budget in San Francisco nor in Long Beach, both of which have plastic bag bans. Elicia and everyone at Crown Poly are looking to their City Council to examine the facts, do the right thing and protect Los Angeles jobs by rejecting this misguided legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cathy Browne'.

Catherine Browne and the Crown Poly family

Cathy Browne is the general manager of Crown Poly, a Los Angeles plastic bag manufacturer



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June 14, 2013

Council President Herb J. Wesson
Los Angeles City Council
200 N. Spring St., Room 430
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: Plastic Bag Legislation in Los Angeles City

Dear Council President Wesson,

On behalf of the American Progressive Bag Alliance (APBA) and the more than 30,800 Americans whose jobs depend on plastic bag manufacturing and recycling, I am writing to oppose the proposal to ban plastic grocery bags and implement a 10-cent tax on paper grocery bags. APBA is an organization of plastic bag manufacturers, members of which work to make a positive change in our communities by promoting increased recycling of plastic bags, as well as their proper use, reuse, recovery and disposal.

More than 2,000 employees in the state of California, at least 1,000 of whom are based in Los Angeles, depend on the plastic bag industry to support their families. In this difficult economy, policies like bag bans and taxes only hurt those who have been most affected by poor economic conditions – low and middle – income residents and families.

We agree with the need to reduce litter, but regulating grocery bags with a ban on a 100 percent recyclable product and imposing a burdensome tax on consumers is not the solution. Justification for the proposed bag ordinance on carryout bags is based on misinformation and will not yield the economic or environmental benefits as intended.

In the two years since Washington, D.C.'s bag tax has been in effect, according to city officials, it has cost residents \$5 million. A similar recent report out of Montgomery County, MD showed that \$2 million was collected in the county during the first year of its bag tax. In a recession, that's real money that would have been better spent by consumers putting food on the table, spurring economic activity and job creation.

Furthermore, there is no data suggesting that bag bans have been impactful in decreasing litter. According to the U.S. EPA, plastics bags comprise less than one percent of the municipal solid waste stream. Regulating such a tiny portion of the waste stream is simply not going to yield a significant reduction in litter. The better, more effective, solution is to encourage increased recycling of plastic bags through consumer education campaigns or incentive-based reward programs.

Plastic bags are 100 percent recyclable, American-made and reusable, and a ban would discourage the growth of successful plastic bag recycling programs in the state. In fact, recycling of polyethylene (retail carryout) bags has now grown in nine out of the last 10 years. It's also important to note that most people in our communities go beyond recycling of plastic bags and actually reuse them as bin liners, for pet waste, storage or other uses. Surveys show that nine out of ten people reuse their bags.

Reusable bags, on the other hand, are not recyclable and cloth-style bags need to be used as much as 131 times in order to be a more environmentally-friendly option than plastic. Also, over 500 million



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reusable bags are imported to the U.S. from foreign countries each year – enough for each family to have 20 bags at home – and some have been found to harbor dangerous bacteria.

When it comes to making the best choice for Los Angeles' communities, environment and the economy, bag legislation is *not* the answer. After being voted down in the State Senate, the California Grocers Association continues to peddle this bag ban and tax scam around the state because big grocers stand to make millions from collecting every penny of the tax on paper bags. I urge the Council to see through this scam and focus on positive solutions for Los Angeles.

What we can do is work together to implement common sense, broad-based recycling policies that will have a real impact on reducing litter and keeping Los Angeles clean. We do it for countless other products already, and we can do it for plastic bags as well.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss the issue further, please do not hesitate to contact me. I'd be happy to offer myself as an additional resource.

Sincerely,

Mark T. Daniels

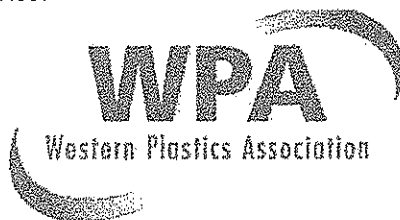
Mark Daniels
Chair, American Progressive Bag Alliance

David Asselin

David Asselin, Executive Director
Executive Director, American Progressive Bag Alliance

CC:

Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa
City Controller Wendy Greuel
Council President Pro Tempore Ed Reyes
Council Member Paul Krekorian
Council Member Dennis Zine
Council Member Tom LaBonge
Council Member Paul Koretz
Council Member Richard Alarcon
Council Member Bernard Parks
Council Member Jan Perry
Council Member Bill Rosendahl
Council Member Mitchell Englander
Council Member Eric Garcetti
Council Member Jose Huizar
Council Member Joe Buscaino



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June 13, 2013

Council President Herb J. Wesson
Los Angeles City Council
200 N. Spring St., Room 430
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: Plastic Bag Legislation in City of Los Angeles

Dear Council President Wesson,

On behalf of Western Plastics Association, a California-based association of plastic bag and film manufacturers representing the West Coast – we strongly urge you to oppose the proposal to ban plastic grocery bags and implement a 10-cent tax on paper grocery bags. WPA is a statewide trade association representing manufacturers of plastic film and bags, equipment manufacturers, and raw material suppliers. More than 1,000 of our member company employees work in Los Angeles.

As California manufacturers, we are especially cognizant of the need for litter education and clean up, increased recycling of our products, and mechanisms that lower the amount of plastic film going into our state's landfills. However, we feel that this ordinance accomplishes very little and will not only harm citizens of the City, but also a very strong manufacturing sector located in Los Angeles that still continues to strain under tough economic conditions.

Banning plastic bags and charging a fee on paper does not accomplish your goals of reducing litter or increasing recycling. The ban will put a burden on Los Angeles citizens at a time when people are still struggling to purchase groceries, let alone pay for carry out bags.

This ordinance also ignores the concerns of small businesses and imposes unacceptable burdens on the "mom and pop" shops that make the city run. The reporting requirements that the legislation imposes add more red tape and further burden business owners. If Los Angeles wants to attract business and expand growth, it cannot continue adding red tape, especially in already lean economic times.

We ask the City Council to please protect jobs and support our industry by voting "No" on anti-bag legislation.

Sincerely,

John Picciuto
President,
Western Plastics Association

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