

CF # 11-1531



December 7, 2011

The Honorable Mayor Villaraigosa
200 North Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012-3239
Via Fax: (213) 978-0650 – 2 pages

RE: SUPPORT – Single-use Bag Ban

Dear Mayor Villaraigosa:

The undersigned members of the Green LA Coalition write to urge your support of a single-use bag ban as soon as possible in the City of Los Angeles. The action would complement your recent successes to green Los Angeles, such as passage of the Low Impact Development Ordinance and the sewer rate increase.

The Board of Public Works recently unanimously voted to move forward a proposal to ban single-use bags in the City of Los Angeles, and a Council motion called for the same policy. You have been an effective champion of this issue statewide, and now is the time for Los Angeles to set an example for the entire nation.

The environmental and economic impacts of single-use bag pollution in inland and coastal communities throughout our City are devastating. Californians use an estimated 12 billion single-use plastic bags every year. The City of San Francisco estimated that to clean up, recycle, and landfill plastic bags costs the city 17 cents per bag. This figure does not include all of the energy costs associated with producing single-use bags, or the negative environmental, economic and public health costs associated with single-use bag litter.

We cannot recycle our way out of this problem. Despite efforts to expand recycling programs, less than 5% of single-use plastic bags are currently being recycled. The rest of these bags end up in our landfills or as litter, clogging stormdrain systems, and making their way to our waterways and ocean. The Los Angeles River you are fighting so hard to revitalize is lined with plastic bag-filled willows after a major rain. Plastic lasts for hundreds of years in our environment and may never biodegrade in the ocean. As a result, it poses a persistent threat to wildlife. Paper bag production contributes to deforestation, greenhouse gas emissions, and waterborne wastes from the pulping and paper making process.

Los Angeles County, Long Beach, Calabasas, Santa Monica, Malibu, Manhattan Beach, San Francisco, San Jose, Santa Clara County, Santa Cruz County, Marin County, Fairfax, and Palo Alto have banned plastic bags and dozens of other cities in California are considering this approach. If the City moves forward with a ban, the State will soon follow.

The City of Los Angeles has a critical role to play in becoming a true leader in eliminating single-use bag waste and preventing the proliferation of plastic pollution in our communities. Thus we urge you to lead the effort to move forward a single-use bag ban expeditiously in the City of Los Angeles to help fulfill your goal of the cleanest, greenest big city in the nation.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Taylor
Green LA Urban Ecosystems Work Group

Melanie Winter
The River Project

Conner Everts
So CA Watershed Alliance

Elva Yanez
Colibri Strategies

Ryan Snyder
Ryan Snyder Associates

Siobahn Dolan
Desal Response Group

Deborah Murphy
Los Angeles Walks

Miguel Luna
Urban Semillas

Veronica Padilla
Pacoima Beautiful

Alexis Lantz
Los Angeles County Bicycle Coalition

Ron Silverman
Sierra Club Angeles Chapter

Craig W. Cadwallader
Surfrider Foundation - South Bay Chapter
Rise Above Plastics Committee Chair

Alan Walti
Surfrider Foundation - South Bay Chapter

Marcus Castain
Generation Water

Deborah Weinstein
TreePeople

Jessica Gudmundson
Urban & Environmental Policy Institute at Occidental
College

Nidia Garcia-Erceg
City Vida

Juli Schultz
Rise Above Plastics Committee Chair, Volunteer
Surfrider Foundation West LA/Malibu Chapter

Armando Alaniz

cc: Councilmember Paul Koretz