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2 messages

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Sun, May 19, 2013 at 4:41 PM

Honorable Los Angeles City Council Members
An Update on the carryout bag controversy

The below is the essence of the previously cited Los Angeles Times' editorial, itself:

By The Times editorial board

April 30, 2013

The most sensible solution to the ocean and stream pollution caused by carry-out plastic bags would be to charge a <smallest one that most efficiently works> fee for them. People will do almost anything to avoid even a tiny ley — tote their own reusable bags, toss their loose groceries into the trunk. Unfortunately, none of the three bills in the Legislature to address the plastic bag problem would work that way.

Consumers already pay for carry-out bags; they just don't realize it because the cost is rolled into the price of the goods they buy, creating the illusion that the bags are free. **Where they've been made explicit, fees of just 5 cents have cut plastic bag use 75% to 90%.**

Still, **people occasionally need or want the convenience of a plastic bag** and would pay a little extra for one, so **why not? The goal should be to greatly reduce** the number of bags floating around as trash — the flimsy bags with handles are the second most common trash item found along California's beaches, and they contribute to the giant floating garbage patch in the Pacific Ocean — **but not to make people live without them entirely.** People who pay for the bags are more likely to reuse them. (For unknown reasons, the plastic bags that grocery shoppers use for their vegetables — and those used to wrap this newspaper — do not tend to end up as trash in or near waterways.)

A 2006 California law prohibits cities from adopting fees on plastic bags. <As some Final EIR report commenters have noted, this law has sunsetted, and two levels of Appellate Court decisions have upheld the legality of charging for bags (of whatever materials).>

As proposed (by the state, but the city could surely do it independently, a combination of such small, but effective, fees would encourage people to switch to reusable bags, while providing convenience and choice for the times they forget to bring them. (By the way, lest it be forgotten, charging five cents for each paper bag in such circumstances would clearly be justified only if the said bags came with built-in handles—as most, but currently not all, do; that would very likely also help reduce the usage of plastic bags... "with handles"... (by definition) even further, as well.)

In summary then, please consider the above suggestions by The Times, which I, for one— likely among many— would surely support myself, as a best, **least disruptive to shoppers**, most viable and yet practical combination of the various EIR report-found alternatives.

Respectfully,
Harvey Pearson
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