



July 20, 2018

Mayor Eric Garcetti and City Council
 Los Angeles City Council
 200 N Spring St, Los Angeles
 Los Angeles, CA 90012

RE: Support for Council File Item #18-0652 – Minimum Recycled Content & Connected Caps

Mayor Garcetti and Councilmembers,

The undersigned organizations are in strong support of Council File Item #18-0652, relating to minimum recycled content and connected beverage caps. Under the motion, all beverage containers sold or distributed in the City of Los Angeles would be required to contain at least 75% post-consumer recycled content, in addition to a cap that is connected to its bottle.

At a time when billion-dollar industries feel comfortable extorting the California Legislature in order to maintain the status quo of high sugary drink consumption – a contributor to the growing plastic pollution crisis – our State relies on leaders like Councilmember Paul Koretz to be at the forefront of progressive and necessary public policy such as that contained within File Item #18-0652.

While California has reaped great environmental benefits from diverting most beverage containers from the waste and litter stream, analyses by the California Department of Resources, Recycling, and Recovery (CalRecycle) and others demonstrate that the full environmental and economic benefits of recycling are derived from utilizing recycled content in manufacturing, for example:

- Increasing the use of recycled content in #1 PET plastic bottles by 23% can reduce resulting greenhouse gas emissions (GHG's) by 10%; and
- For every 10% increase in the use of recycled glass in the manufacturing process, the resulting GHG's are reduced by 6-10%.

Existing requirements for glass containers to include at least 35% recycled content has reduced pollution and stimulated closed-loop manufacturing in California, whereby better than 85% of glass collected for recycling is returned to California glass manufacturers. Such closed-loop manufacturing has increased jobs in the recycling industry – currently estimated at 125,000 in California alone – while reducing energy consumption, air pollution, and greenhouse gas emissions. A minimum recycled content ordinance on beverage containers in the City of Los Angeles – particularly at the proposed 75% rate – will provide similar outcomes, including increased employment opportunities, for plastic and other container types.

Councilmember Koretz’s timing on the introduction of File Item #18-0652 is especially critical in light of the recent closure of the historic overseas market in China for plastic collected for recycling in California. Now is the time to extend the objectives of California’s Beverage Container Recycling Program, the Bottle Bill, and enhance California’s end-use markets for our locally generated recyclable material.

When planning for a future with plastic-free oceans and strong markets for recycled materials, it will be necessary to re-design beverage containers to ensure that their caps are connected to their bottles. Bottle caps are significant contributor to ocean plastic pollution – a crisis that in just seven years will result in a 3:1 ratio for fish to plastic and grow to where plastic will outweigh fish in the oceans by 2050.

As the third most commonly found type of pollution on California beaches, bottle caps are frequently found in the bellies of birds and other ocean wildlife that starve to death after consuming too much plastic. The unnecessary and preventable type of plastic pollution will continue to break up into smaller and smaller pieces that are introducing themselves into our food chain through the seafood we eat and the water we drink – both tap and bottled water alike – unless we institute common-sense design changes.

Connected bottle caps are already in practice for beverage products across the globe, including many that are sold and even manufactured right here in California. Local recycling operations already have the technology to separate the plastic in the cap from the plastic in the bottle, so a connected cap would simply allow recyclers to capture, sell, and earn revenue from cap plastic.

The undersigned organizations commend the City of Los Angeles and Councilmember Koretz’s leadership in introducing a motion for minimum recycled content and connected caps for beverage containers. If passed, File Item #18-0652 has the potential to stem the wave of plastic bottle cap pollution and spur local markets for recycled material – just as the City’s landmark single use plastic bag ban paved the way for our existing statewide bag ban.

Accordingly, we respectfully urge your strong support for File Item #18-0652.

Sincerely,

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