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Pending Energy & Environment Committee consideration of a city wide carryout bag policy

1 message

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Fri, Jun 7, 2013 at 1:03 PM

Honorable City Councilman Jose Huizar
Chair, Energy & Environment Committee
Attn. Martin Schlageter, Policy Director
Other Honorable Committee Members
City Council File No. 11-1531
Los Angeles City Council
City Hall
Los Angeles, California

Re June 17 Committee Hearing regarding a carryout bag ordinance for the City of Los Angeles, specifically including a response to the California Grocers Association's input of June 3, 2013 (as entered into City Council File No. 11-1531)

Dear Chairman Huizar/Committee Members:

There are numerous municipalities throughout the United States—not to mention the world—that have decided to put a fee (typically a five cent per bag one) on both plastic and paper carryout bags—rather than place an outright ban on market-supplied use of the plastic ones. For example:

THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA - 1 ordinance covering 1 municipality.

Washington, DC - Five cent fee on both plastic and paper checkout bags. Approved by City Council in 2009 and effective January 2010. Funds from the fees collected go to help keep the Anacosta River healthy. This ordinance has been deemed a big success by reducing litter and increasing reusable bags. (Various other states' municipalities also have this successful program in effect.)

<<If it's a good enough for our nation's capitol, it should, and no doubt would, be good enough for the City of Los Angeles, CA!>>

Because, as the Los Angeles Times wrote in an April 30, 2013 editorial ("Slap A Fee On Carryout Bags"): "The (city's) goal should be to greatly reduce the number of (plastic) bags floating around as trash—but *not to make people live without them entirely*. As the Times' editorial notes: "Where they've been made explicit, fees of just 5 cents have cut plastic bag use 75% to 90%!"

Now, the so-called "plastic bag industry" has been accused of being a "bully." Well, I personally have absolutely no connection with the industry whatsoever, and can think for myself. On the other hand, it would appear as if the CGA may well be trying to muscle its wishes on through the Los Angeles City Council—their customers/consumers' choices be damned. (Albeit, I'm not too happy with the industry's obviously trying to knock paper bags, for the sake of its bread-and-butter plastic ones, since I personally empty an, ideal for the purpose, **paper** bag full of trash into my apartment building dumpster practically every single day of the year!)

If such a compromise suggestion is doomed to failure, however, then please at least mandate that all carryout paper bags sold in our city must come with built-in handles... by such and such a date.

Thank you for your deepest consideration of this very important matter.

Sincerely Yours,

Harvey Pearson
Los Angeles