

REPORT OF THE CHIEF LEGISLATIVE ANALYST

DATE: May 15, 2014

TO: Honorable Members of the Rules, Elections and Intergovernmental Relations Committee

FROM: Gerry F. Miller 
Chief Legislative Analyst

Council File No: 14-0002-S54
Assignment No: 14-04-0321

SUBJECT: Resolution (Koretz - Krekorian) to SUPPORT SB 270 (Padilla, De Leon, Lara)

CLA RECOMMENDATION: Adopt Resolution (Koretz - Krekorian) to include in the City's 2013-2014 State Legislative Program SUPPORT for SB 270 (Padilla, De Leon, Lara) which seeks to prohibit grocery stores, large retailers, convenience stores and food marts from providing free single-use plastic bags to consumers; and require those stores to have reusable bags available for purchase.

SUMMARY:

Resolution (Koretz - Krekorian), introduced on April 25, 2014, states that each year more than 13 billion single-use plastic bags are handed out by retailers throughout the state; however, only 3% of these bags are recycled. The remaining bags end up in landfills.

The Resolution further states that plastic bags remain one of the top items found during annual beach cleanups. Additionally, the Convention on Biological Diversity reports a total of 663 marine species have been affected by plastic pollution through entanglement or ingestion. A recent autopsy report/study of leatherback sea turtles showed that 1 in 3 contained plastic materials in their stomachs.

The Resolution states that a third of Californians, including residents in the City, are subject to laws phasing out single-use plastic bags. In an effort to effectuate this policy statewide, the Resolution notes that SB 270 seeks to prohibit grocery stores and large retailers from providing single-use plastic bags to customers effective 2015; and would expand that prohibition to convenience stores and food marts the following year.

The Resolution also states that SB 270 has been amended to strengthen the reusable bag standards to 1) add a minimum 125 uses and a 22 pound weight requirement; 2) to provide local authority to adopt or amend bag bans beyond the scope of the state law. Therefore, the Resolution requests that the City support SB 270.

BACKGROUND:

The measure seeks to reduce the negative environmental impacts associated with the use of single-use plastic bags. SB 270 also seeks to create and protect green jobs by implementing standards and incentives for plastic bag manufacturers to transition to making reusable bags.

The Bureau of Sanitation (BOS) reports that approximately 19 billion single-use plastic bags are used per year throughout the state. Furthermore, it takes a 1,000 years for a single-use plastic bag to break down.

Most of these bags end up in the litter stream or in landfills since the majority (95%) are not recycled. When carelessly discarded, these bags create blight that is pervasive in the public landscape such as parks and streets. They also impact marine life in the streams and oceans. As a result, the City programs millions of dollars annually on prevention, cleanup and abatement of single-use plastic bags.

City Action

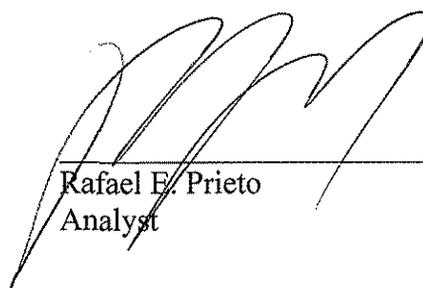
SB 270 complements the City’s single-use plastic bag ban ordinance adopted by the Council on June 25, 2013. The ordinance when into effect on January 1, 2014 for large retailers and followed for small retailers on July 1, 2014. The City also adopted a commensurate 10 cent charge per paper bag. To support the transition, the BOS distributes reusable bags and is continuing to educate constituents about the importance of reducing, reusing and recycling.

DEPARTMENTS NOTIFIED

Department of Public Works, Bureau of Sanitation

BILL STATUS

3/27/14 Amended and referred to Assembly Natural Resources Committee
5/14/14 Passed Assembly Natural Resources Committee; referred to Assembly Appropriations



Rafael E. Prieto
Analyst

Attachment: 1. Resolution (Koretz - Krekorian)

14-0002-554

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RULES, ELECTIONS & INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, any official position of the City of Los Angeles with respect to legislation, rules, regulations or policies proposed to or pending before a local, state or federal governmental body or agency must have first been adopted in the form of a Resolution by the City Council with the concurrence of the Mayor; and

WHEREAS, each year in California more than 13 billion single-use plastic bags are handed out by retailers, only 3% of these bags are recycled and the rest end up in landfills or as litter; and

WHEREAS, California requires suffocation warning labels for plastic bags due to the very real threat of death plastic bags hold for babies and children; and

WHEREAS, plastic bags cause slow sorting and jam machinery at recycling centers; and

WHEREAS, according to a study commissioned by the US Marine Debris Monitoring Program, plastic bags remain one of the top items found consistently during annual beach cleanups. The Convention on Biological Diversity reports a total of 663 species have been affected by plastic marine pollution through entanglement or ingestion, and a 2009 study found that 1 in 3 leatherback sea turtles studied had plastic in their stomachs, most often a plastic bag, based on an analysis of over 370 autopsy reports; and

WHEREAS, a third of Californians, including those in Los Angeles as of January 1, 2014, are subject to laws phasing out the use of single-use plastic bags; and

WHEREAS, State Senators Padilla, de León, and Lara have authored SB 270, which would prohibit grocery stores and large retailers from providing single-use bags to customers in 2015, and would expand that prohibition to convenience stores and food marts in 2016; and

WHEREAS, SB 270 has been amended to strengthen reusable bag standards to: add a minimum 125 use, 22 lb weight requirement for all reusable bags; to insure the authority of local governments to adopt or amend bag bans beyond the scope of the state law; and to insure local governments are authorized to amend bag charges, which must be a minimum of 10 cents;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, with the concurrence of the Mayor, that upon the adoption of this Resolution and conditional of the inclusion of the requirements included in the previous paragraph, the City of Los Angeles hereby includes in its 2013-2014 State Legislative Program SUPPORT for Senate Bill 270 (Padilla, de León, Lara) that would prohibit grocery stores, large retailers, convenience stores, and food marts from providing free single-use plastic bags to consumers, and require those stores to have reusable bags available for purchase

PRESENTED BY Paul Koretz
PAUL KORETZ
Councilmember, 5th District

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