

November 15, 2011

Mayor and City Council Members
City of Sacramento
915 I Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Ordinance to Ban Single-Use Plastic Bags

Dear Mayor Johnson and Council Members:

We respectfully urge you to pass an ordinance restricting the distribution of single-use plastic bags in the City of Sacramento.

In these tough economic times, a plastic bag ban ordinance would help lower cleanup and compliance costs. Californians use an estimated 12 billion plastic bags per year. According to CalRecycle, only three percent of these bags are actually recycled. The rest end up in landfills and as litter. Sacramento, along with other municipalities statewide, spends more than \$25 million each year to clean up plastic single-use bags from public places, storm drains, and in our waste stream. Local taxpayer dollars are also spent to comply with Stormwater Permit requirements and other standards in communities with “trash-impaired” waterways as defined under the federal Clean Water Act.

In addition to the economic benefits of a plastic bag ban, there are countless environmental benefits. These include reduced use of natural resources for bag production, reduced wildlife fatalities from strangulation and suffocation, and improved water quality. For all intents and purposes, plastic never biodegrades, but slowly photo degrades. As it photo degrades, plastic film breaks into smaller and smaller pieces that attract surrounding toxins. When mistaken as a food source, these plastic particles form a progressively greater health risk to food chain contamination.

Plastic marine pollution is a global problem with local solutions. Banning the free distribution of plastic bags is widely considered an appropriate and practical legislative action that can protect our environment and save financial resources. The County of Los Angeles, and the City of San Jose, along with eleven other local governments in the region and around the state, have already taken this approach, and I strongly urge you to do the same.

Thank you for your leadership on this issue.

Sincerely,



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American River Conservancy



Preserving rivers and land for life

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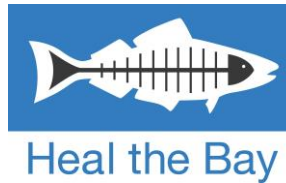
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