
SACRAMENTO ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

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A JOINT COMMISSION APPOINTED BY:
County of Sacramento
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City of Elk Grove
City of Galt
City of Isleton

March 2, 2015

Phil Serna, Chair
Sacramento County Board of Supervisors
700 H Street, Suite 1450
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: Recommendation to Support the Adoption of Local Ordinances that Restrict Single Use Plastic Bags

Dear Chair Serna,

The Sacramento Environmental Commission (SEC) is a joint County/City appointed commission chartered to advise the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors and the City Councils of Folsom, Galt, Isleton, Elk Grove and Sacramento on environmental issues facing our communities.

In September 2014, the California Legislature passed Senate Bill 270 (SB 270) to regulate the use of single-use plastic bags with the intent of reducing litter in the environment and potential hazards to wildlife. The new law eliminated the use of single-use plastic bags in larger grocery stores in 2015 and would eliminate them in smaller convenience stores in 2016. The use of reusable plastic bags is not affected by this law.

After several unsuccessful lawsuits, the plastic bag manufacturing industry has recently placed a referendum to repeal the statewide restrictions on the November 2016 state ballot. If passed, the statewide restrictions enacted by the Legislature would be revoked.

Over 138 individual California communities have adopted local restrictions on single-use plastic bags, affecting about 38 million Californians. The cities of San Jose, San Francisco, Oakland and many other Bay Area communities have already adopted restrictions on the use of single-use plastic bags through local ordinances. These local restrictions have been found to be very effective. For example, in the City of Solana Beach, with a population of about 13,000 residents, single-use plastic bag restrictions adopted in 2012 have eliminated about 6.5 million single use plastic bags in that community alone. The SEC has concluded that restrictions on single-use

plastic bag use would provide a substantial environmental benefit to communities in Sacramento County, would not pose an undue burden to residents, and would reduce the cost to collect litter when released to the environment.

The SEC wishes to encourage Sacramento County communities to adopt uniform local restrictions on the use of single-use plastic bags, enacting consistent ordinances enforceable within all Sacramento County communities. A uniform set of restrictions, similar to those being reconsidered by the City of Sacramento and patterned after SB 270, would provide consistent guidance that would effectively eliminate the use of single-use plastic bags. Uniform regulations would also avoid individual community restrictions that may cause confusion to the public and retailers, such as grocery stores, within Sacramento County.

Enacting local ordinances to restrict the use of single-use plastic bags would enhance the quality of our environment by reducing a source of litter, a threat to local aesthetics, and hazards to terrestrial and aquatic wildlife. The SEC believes that enacting uniform local ordinances to control single-use plastic bag would provide a substantial environmental benefit to our communities and provide consistent guidance that would minimize potential confusion and costly implementation of individual local restrictions.

The SEC recommends your consideration of a community-specific single-use plastic bag restriction ordinance. If you have any questions, please contact SEC Secretary Jill Koehn at (916) 875-8584.

Sincerely,



George "Buzz" Link, Chair,
Sacramento Environmental Commission

[1http://www.ci.solana-beach.ca.us/index.asp?SEC=68D67EC8-7D90-48CE-AE05-0DE5B6795D82&DE=A6CDF04D-CA28-4F9D-ABBF-E37A1290CA45&Type=B_PR](http://www.ci.solana-beach.ca.us/index.asp?SEC=68D67EC8-7D90-48CE-AE05-0DE5B6795D82&DE=A6CDF04D-CA28-4F9D-ABBF-E37A1290CA45&Type=B_PR)