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LOS ANGELES COUNTY
SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE/
INTEGRATED WASTE MANAGEMENT TASK FORCE
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April 26, 2013

The Honorable Mike Gatto, Chair
Assembly Appropriations Committee
1020 N Street, Room 2114
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Assemblymember Gatto,

**ASSEMBLY BILL 158 (AMENDED APRIL 9, 2013)
SOLID WASTE: SINGLE-USE CARRYOUT BAGS**

The Los Angeles County Solid Waste Management Committee/Integrated Waste Management Task Force (Task Force) **supports if amended** Assembly Bill 158 (AB 158) as amended on April 9, 2013. If enacted, AB 158 would prohibit a store from providing a plastic carryout bag to a customer while establishing a statewide uniform standard for carryout bags to be labeled as “reusable”.

Pursuant to Chapter 3.67 of the Los Angeles County Code and the California Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989 (Assembly Bill 939, as amended), the Task Force is responsible for coordinating the development of all major solid waste planning documents prepared for the County of Los Angeles and the 88 cities in Los Angeles County with a combined population in excess of ten million. Consistent with these responsibilities and to ensure a coordinated and cost-effective and environmentally sound solid waste management system in Los Angeles County, the Task Force also addresses issues impacting the system on a countywide basis. The Task Force membership includes representatives of the League of California Cities-Los Angeles County Division, County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors, City of Los Angeles, waste management industry, environmental groups, the public, and a number of other governmental agencies.

Each year, approximately 19 billion plastic carryout bags are consumed in California, the equivalent of 1,600 bags per household per year. Less than five percent of those bags are recycled, with the remainder disposed in landfills or ending up littered on beaches, waterways, parks and roads. Due to their lightweight nature, single-use plastic carryout bags are disproportionately more likely to end up as litter. Plastic bag litter makes up as much as 25 percent of the litter stream and significantly impact communities and the environment. In Los Angeles County alone, local and State governments spend tens of millions of dollars each year on litter prevention, stormwater

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infrastructure cleanup, and enforcement activities, including single-use bag litter. In the last few years, more than 70 local governments throughout the State including the County of Los Angeles and City of Los Angeles, have voted to phase out the distribution of single-use plastic bags by supermarkets and other stores to their customers.

The Task Force has been supportive of these single-use plastic bag bans. While these efforts have become more common, many companies have looked to take advantage of the trend towards the usage of reusable bags by actively marketing their bags as "reusable". However, there are bags that have been marketed as such that are sub-standard, failing to meet usage expectation and in some cases containing toxic levels of heavy metals. In light of these facts, there is a pressing need for a statewide uniform standard for a bag to be labeled as "reusable".

The standards set forth in AB 158 are nearly identical to a number of local government ordinances, including that of Los Angeles County. Moreover, a statewide ban of plastic bags would even the playing field for stores and jurisdictions while increasing the State's long term environmental sustainability aspirations.

In order to assure local jurisdictions retain their ability to enforce local ordinances that have already been enacted and that may or may not go beyond the provisions of this bill, we respectfully request an amendment with an explicit statement which indicates that AB 158 would not preempt such ordinances.

For these reasons, the Task Force **supports** AB 158 **if it is amended as requested**. Should you have any questions please contact Mr. Mike Mohajer of the Task Force at MikeMohajer@yahoo.com or (909) 592-1147.

Sincerely,



Margaret Clark, Vice-Chair
Los Angeles County Solid Waste Management Committee/
Integrated Waste Management Task Force and
Council Member, City of Rosemead

cc: Assemblymembers Marc Levine, Ammiano, Chesbro, Godon, and Lowenthal
Senator Hill
Each Member of the Assembly Appropriations Committee
Each Member of the Los Angeles County Legislative Delegation
Each Member of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors
California Association of Counties
League of California Cities
League of California Cities, Los Angeles County Division
San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments

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South Bay Cities Council of Governments

San Fernando Valley Council of Governments

Gateway Cities Council of Governments

Westside Cities Council of Governments

Each City Mayor and City Manager in the County of Los Angeles

Each City Recycling Coordinator in Los Angeles County

Each Member of the Los Angeles County Integrated Waste Management Task Force