

LA council backs 25 cents per plastic bag charge

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A state bill that would institute a 25 cent fee for each plastic bag used by shoppers was endorsed today by the Los Angeles City Council, which last year approved a ban on plastic bags if the state fails to implement the penalty.

Assembly Bill 87, authored by Assemblyman Mike Davis, D-Los Angeles, would establish a point-of-sale fee of 25 cents for each plastic bag used by a customer. Of that fee, 7 cents would be retained by the store and 18 cents would be forwarded to the state to support anti-pollution and recycling programs.

In supporting the bill, the council asked Davis to combine his bill with AB 68 from Assemblywoman Julia Brownley, D-Santa Monica, which is virtually the same except in how the fee is distributed between store owners and state programs.

Councilman Richard Alarcon said he was watching "Desperate Housewives" yesterday and noted that the characters used canvas grocery bags.

"In this one scene, the husband walked in with

about 10 bags that he was carrying and every one of them was green and so it was a very powerful message. But we have to make it part of our daily reality. 'Desperate Housewives' just doesn't capture our sense of daily reality," Alarcon said.

Last year, the council approved a policy to ban plastic bags at all supermarkets and retail stores in Los Angeles beginning July 1, 2010. After that date, consumers will have to use their own reusable bags or pay 25 cents for a paper, compostable or biodegradable bag.

The local ban would only take effect if a statewide fee has not been established by that time.