

Thursday, January 15, 2009

H-E-B puts support behind plastic bag legislation

San Antonio Business Journal - by [Tricia Lynn Silva](#)

H.E. Butt Grocery Co. is backing a new piece of legislation filed by Texas Sen. Leticia Van de Putte that would require businesses to maintain on-site recycling bins for plastic bags at retail stores.

The bill would also require grocers to offer customers reasonably priced re-usable bags. Van de Putte, D-San Antonio, filed Senate Bill 338 last December.

The goal is to reduce the amount of plastic bags consumed by Texans.

“We have been working closely with Sen. Van de Putte’s office on this legislation,” says Dya Celeste Campos, director of public affairs for H.E. Butt Grocery (H-E-B) in San Antonio.

H-E-B, Campos says, has already instituted both measures at their stores. Bins are located at the entrances for recycling not only H-E-B plastic bags, but all soft plastics.

In 2008 alone, H-E-B succeeded in recycling 3 million pounds of plastic bags.

The retailer also sells a variety of re-usable bags — including their standard green bag that sells for 99 cents. H-E-B also sells larger, specially designed bags — including bags specifically for cold items — for anywhere from \$1.49 to \$1.79. The bags are located in the check-out areas of the store, Campos adds.

“In a perfect world, everyone would use re-usable bags,” she says.

Until then, H-E-B is focusing on ways to educate and encourage their customers to do just that, Campos says, who adds that the grocer also supports customers bringing in their own re-usable bags.

As part of the education campaign, H-E-B is also training its checkers how to properly sack groceries in a re-usable bag. Signs at the entrances are being used to remind customers to bring in their re-usable bags. The grocer has also begun handing out reminder keytags that can be placed on a customers key ring.

“We still have a lot of work to do,” says Campos of H-E-B’s eco-friendly bag education campaign. “But it’s the right thing to do to support a sustainable community.”