

SCVNews.com | Supervisors Support Statewide Plastic Bag Ban

Press Release

Los Angeles County Supervisor Gloria Molina announced Tuesday the Board of Supervisors' support of SB 405 (Padilla), which would phase out single-use plastic bags across California.

"Over two years ago, I introduced an ordinance banning free carryout plastic bags in all unincorporated area stores," Molina said. "Last year, Los Angeles City Councilmember Paul Koretz introduced a similar motion banning single-use bags in the City of Los Angeles. I am proud to support SB 405, which would now ban plastic bags in the entire state of California."



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 impacts communities and the environment. In Los Angeles County alone, local and state governments spend tens of millions of dollars each year on litter prevention, storm water infrastructure cleanup, and enforcement activities – including for single-use bag litter.

SB 405 would do the following:

- Beginning January 1, 2015, grocery stores and pharmacies would be prohibited from making available single-use plastic bags. If paper bags are offered to customers, they would have to include recycled content and customers would have to be charged the actual cost of providing the recycled paper bags.
- Beginning July 1, 2016, convenience stores and liquor stores would be required to meet the same standard.
- The bill would not pre-empt local ordinances already in place.

Los Angeles County's Plastic and Paper Carryout Bag Ordinance – which Molina authored – took effect on Friday, July 1, 2011 for larger stores and on Sunday, January 1, 2012 for smaller stores. It affected only unincorporated regions. The ordinance prohibited stores from providing plastic carryout bags to customers and further required a ten-cent charge for each paper bag that customers chose to purchase.

To help shoppers transition, Molina partnered with the county's Department of Public Works on a reusable campaign and held free reusable bag giveaways at 28 different locations throughout June of 2011. The

giveaways marked the conclusion of Molina's individual effort to promote reusable bags throughout the First Supervisorial District. It started in the Summer of 2009, when Molina enlisted over 1,450 unincorporated Florence-Firestone students as "Earth Defenders" to reduce their families' use of plastic bags. Students received "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle" prize cards. Those who amassed the most stickers on it over a two-month period each time they or their parent shopped with a reusable bag instead of a plastic bag received prizes, ranging from free bicycles to Dodgers baseball game tickets. Teachers representing classrooms with the top prize card utilization rate also received rewards – such as gift cards to local office supply stores. By the end of the summer, Florence-Firestone students prevented approximately 4,000 plastic bags from being used.

In the Fall of 2009, Molina enlisted 3,800 more Earth Defenders, this time from unincorporated Valinda. They saved close to 7,000 plastic bags from the trash. In the Spring of 2010, over 4,000 unincorporated East Los Angeles students joined the cause. They saved over 7,500 plastic bags from the garbage. In sum, First District youth prevented over 18,500 plastic bags from further filling up Los Angeles County's landfills and waterways.