

'Green monster' hits city

By Alison Hewitt, Pasadena Star News

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PASADENA - The Colorado Boulevard lunch crowd looked alternately amused and bewildered Wednesday by attacks from a bag monster.

The monster's appearance was staged by LUSH Cosmetics as part of an Earth Day campaign to ban plastic bags in Pasadena in order to save the environment.

"A plastic bag! Give it to me!" shrieked LUSH employee Veronica Lauder-Chriss, lurching down the sidewalk in her costume of 350 bags. She cajoled shoppers to "feed" the monster by tying their plastic bags to her costume in exchange for a reusable canvas bag.

The bag monster's co-worker, Senica Sierra, also called on people to go green by signing a petition to the mayor demanding that Pasadena ban plastic bags.

"You only use plastic bags for about five seconds for your groceries and then you throw them away, but they don't break down," Sierra said. "They just build up in the environment."

County residents use about 6 billion bags annually, or 600 per person, and recycle less than 5 percent of them, according to Heal the Bay. Los Angeles County recently created mandatory bag-reduction targets for grocery stores, and cities like San Francisco have already banned plastic bags. A bill moving through the state assembly could allow local governments to impose a per-bag fee.

Under attack by the bag monster Wednesday in Pasadena, Raymond Ray transferred his lunch leftovers into one of the canvas bags, which he planned to add to the collection of reusable bags he already uses for grocery shopping. Ray was one of the few passersby who didn't veer away or speed-walk past the bizarre spectacle.

LUSH employees fashioned the monster costume with contributions from a bag drive and will recycle the entire thing, Sierra said as she kept an eye on the synthetic creature.

"Oh, she's falling apart!" Sierra cried and snatched up two bags that had molted off the monster.

"That's not helping the environment."