

## A ban on plastic bags will benefit us all

Tuesday, June 8, 2010



California is set to be the first state in the nation to outlaw plastic shopping bags - and charge shoppers at least 5 cents for paper ones. The bill, which passed the state Assembly 41-27 and is expected to pass the state Senate by the end of its session, goes further than even San Francisco's ban. It would prohibit grocery stores from offering plastic bags beginning in January 2012 and extend the prohibition to convenience stores, drugstores and smaller businesses by July 2013.

It will be a big adjustment.

How will we remember to bring our own bags? What will we do about picking up after our dogs on the sidewalk? With what will we line our trash cans?

Only a small percentage of even recyclable plastic bags are ever recycled. The rest clog our landfills, rivers and oceans. According to bill author Assemblywoman Julia Brownley, D-Santa Monica, California taxpayers spend about \$25 million every year picking up and disposing of stray plastic bags.

Paper bags, though not as environmentally destructive, are costly and are also rarely recycled. It's proper for this bill to account for their overall cost, too.

The best bag is the one that you bring from home. And though it may require all of us to make small personal adjustments, the benefit of a cleaner environment is a big one that we'll all share.

<http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2010/06/08/EDM91DR8P5.DTL>

This article appeared on page **A - 15** of the San Francisco Chronicle

© 2010 Hearst Communications Inc.