

Santa Cruz Co. Green Lights Plastic Bag Ban

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SANTA CRUZ, Calif. -- Santa Cruz County supervisors have given the green light to a shopping bag ordinance that would ban the use of plastic bags and impose a surcharge on paper bags.

Before the ordinance goes into effect, however, an environmental study must be conducted, which could delay the new law by more than a year.

The ban would have shoppers in the county provide their own bags to take groceries home -- or pay a 10 cent fee for paper bags.

"We have cloth bags all over the place, why not reuse them?" said shopper Abbie Miller. "The resource we have at our disposal is easy to use. You just have to get into the habit."

The group Save Our Shores, meanwhile, has collected 17,000 plastic bags during beach cleanups since 2007.

"Once these plastic bags enter the ocean, there are several things that can happen when marine life encounters them," said Emily Glanville, of Save Our Shores. "They can get entangled in them. They can ingest them or choke and suffocate on these plastic bags. All of these occurrences can lead to death."

But before the plastic bag ordinance becomes law, an environmental impact report needs to be done, which can cost as much as \$100,000. But board members said they think it will be less.

"They just set aside that amount of money, and I think the expectation is in case there's a lawsuit or other challenge," said Santa Cruz County supervisor Mark Stone. "I cannot imagine that amount of money, especially with the work that's been done in other jurisdictions."

As for grocery store owners, Ron Clements Jr., general manager of Ben Lomond and Scotts Valley Markets, said he is in favor of the ban, but wants to be included in the process.

"I think they have some good idea, and they're going to make some recommendations," Clements said. "Hopefully, they'll come back to business and get our idea. We'll ask our customers. So, we'll take that back to them."



Video: Plastic Bag Ban Set To Come To Santa Cruz County