

# Plastic bag ban may be signed into law in California

The California state legislature enacted a ban on single-use, plastic bags. Many cities, (several in California, Washington, and Texas) have made it illegal for grocery stores and restaurants to use plastic bags at checkout, but if the bill is signed into law, California would be the first to enact a statewide ban on plastic bags.

Plastic bags take up to 1,000 years to decompose and are causing notorious environmental problems worldwide, from blocking drains that can lead to flooding, to killing animals that become entangled in discarded bags or choke on the plastic. The damage done by plastic bags costs taxpayers millions every year, and considering long term environmental degradation, the cost down the road is staggering.

The senator who sponsored the bill, Alex Padilla, said, "Single-use plastic bags not only litter our beaches, but also our mountains, our deserts, and our rivers, streams and lakes."

The California Senate voted 22-15 in favor of the bill. It needs to be signed into law by the 30th of September by Governor Jerry Brown, who has yet to identify a position on the measure.

Not only would the bill ban grocery stores from giving out disposable, plastic, grocery bags at checkout, the bill would also provide funds for local plastic bag manufactures to help them retool to make reusable bags.

Despite intense lobbying efforts from plastic bag manufacturers, the tide is turning. It won't be long before plastic grocery bags are a thing of the past.

Most consumers and environmental experts believe that paper bags are a better option than plastic, though there is some debate on the issue. American Plastic Manufacturing, a company based out of Seattle, states that plastic bags are not made with petroleum; they are made with a byproduct of natural gas refining, that would otherwise be put into the atmosphere. They also state that paper bags require more resources to produce.

While the obvious solution is to bring your own reusable bags, American Plastic Manufacturing also claims that this may not be the smartest environmental choice either. But then again, they sell reusable bags on their website.

If you're in the mood for some humor in regards to forgetting your reusable bags at the grocery store, check out *Canvas Bags*.

### **Sources:**

Reuters

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