

# PLASTIC BAG BAN FACT SHEET

## Contra Costa County Climate Leaders

A project of Generation Green - a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization

Find Links to Other Local Government Policy Opportunities at  
[www.cccclimateleaders.org](http://www.cccclimateleaders.org)

### WHAT?

#### **"Paper or Plastic?" How about neither? The solution is reusable so Bring Your Own Bag (BYOB)!**

Consider banning single use plastic bags within your city along with the rest of the 90 cities in California. By creating a plastic bag ban in your city, you can foster sustainable change that prevents plastic pollution and supports regional equity for CCC residents and businesses. An ordinance will reduce greenhouse gases, decrease the blight of litter and will help your city meet its waste diversion requirements. Encourage the stores in your city to offer reusable options or credits for not taking a disposable plastic bag and Promote a "[Bring Your Own Bag](#)" campaign.

### WHY?

The carbon footprint of plastic (LDPE or PET, polyethylene) is **about 6 kg CO<sub>2</sub> per kg of plastic**.<sup>1</sup> Collectively we are using 1 million bags a minute and less than 5% are being recycled. Many end up in our landfill where scientists estimate they will take 1,000 years to biodegrade and many in the Pacific Ocean where an average of 46,000 pieces of plastic are floating in every square mile. [NRDC](#) estimates that California cities spend about \$11 per resident to keep litter from ending up in our oceans as marine pollution. This is a clean water issue and an environmental problem with a simple [solution](#).

### WHO?

A coalition of environmental, labor, and business groups are supporting statewide legislation to ban single use plastic bags in 2015<sup>2</sup>(Padilla, De Leon, Lara), including Californians Against Waste, Environment California, Heal the Bay, Clean Seas Coalition, California League of Conservation Voters, Coastkeepers, Surfrider, United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Western States Council, California Grocers Association, and the California Retailers Association. "SB 270 will help protect our environment by phasing out single-use bags in California. Single-use plastic bags fill our landfills, clog inland waterways, litter our coastline, and kill thousands of fish, marine mammals and seabirds," said Senator Padilla.

### WHERE?

**CITY:** Four cities in CCC have an ordinance in place (Pittsburg, Richmond, El Cerrito and San Pablo), with more moving forward on the issue (Martinez and Walnut Creek).

Examples of City Wide Plastic Bag Ordinances are abundant and vary – existing CCC city ordinances:

- El Cerrito (effective 01/14) <http://ca-elcerrito.civicplus.com/DocumentCenter/View/2677>
- Lafayette (effective 07/15) <https://www.lovelafayette.org/why-lafayette/green-lafayette/plastic-bag-ban>
- Martinez (effective 01/15) <https://www.cityofmartinez.org/government/sustainability-resources/plastic-bag-polystyrene-styrofoam-ban>
- Richmond (effective 01/14) <http://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/DocumentCenter/View/27414>
- San Pablo (effective 01/14) <http://www.cawrecycles.org/files/SanPabloBagBan.pdf>
- Pittsburg (effective 01/14) <http://www.ci.pittsburg.ca.us/Modules/ShowDocument.aspx?documentid=5924>
- Walnut Creek (effective 09/14) [http://www.walnut-creek.org/citygov/depts/ps/cleanwater/bring\\_your\\_bag.asp](http://www.walnut-creek.org/citygov/depts/ps/cleanwater/bring_your_bag.asp)

City Ordinances Currently in Discussion:

<sup>1</sup> [http://wiki.answers.com/Q/How\\_does\\_using\\_plastic\\_bags\\_cause\\_global\\_warming](http://wiki.answers.com/Q/How_does_using_plastic_bags_cause_global_warming)

<sup>2</sup> [http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=201320140SB270](http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201320140SB270)



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**COUNTY:** Six of the nine Bay Area counties have an ordinance:

1. **Alameda County** Waste Management Authority  
[http://www.cawrecycles.org/files/Stopwaste\\_ordinance\\_bag\\_executed.pdf](http://www.cawrecycles.org/files/Stopwaste_ordinance_bag_executed.pdf)
2. **Contra Costa:** No
3. **Marin County:** <http://www.cawrecycles.org/files/ORD-3553.pdf>
4. **Napa :** No
5. **San Francisco:**  
[http://www.cawrecycles.org/files/sfe\\_zw\\_checkout\\_bags\\_ordinance\\_filed\\_and\\_signed.pdf](http://www.cawrecycles.org/files/sfe_zw_checkout_bags_ordinance_filed_and_signed.pdf)
6. **San Mateo:**  
[http://www.cawrecycles.org/files/SanMateoCo\\_ReusableBagOrdinance.pdf](http://www.cawrecycles.org/files/SanMateoCo_ReusableBagOrdinance.pdf)
7. **Santa Clara:** <http://www.cawrecycles.org/files/SCC%20Ordinance.pdf>
8. **Solano:** No
9. **Sonoma:** <http://www.pressdemocrat.com/article/20140115/articles/140119731>



**STATE:** *One of three people in California live somewhere with a bag ban.* Several State Senators [recently announced](#) support for statewide [legislation](#) to ban single use plastic bags and place fees on single use paper bags.

**WORLDWIDE:** England, Mexico, India, Burma, Bangladesh, Rwanda, Australia, Italy Belgium, Ireland. Plenty of other places have chosen not to ban plastic bags, but to discourage them through financial means. There have been taxes on [plastic bags since before 2008](#) in Italy, Belgium, and Ireland, where plastic bag use dropped by 94 percent within weeks of the 2002 ban. In Switzerland, Germany, and Holland, the bags come with a fee.

## HOW?

- ❖ Resources from Stopwaste.org including other ordinances and background studies:  
<http://stopwaste.org/home/index.asp?page=1003>
- ❖ A resource for legislative bodies considering laws limiting the use of plastic bags  
<http://plasticbaglaws.org/legislation/state-laws/california-2/>
- ❖ Crafting an Ordinance to withstand litigation:  
<http://plasticbagbanreport.com/how-to-craft-a-plastic-bag-ban-ordinance-to-withstand-litigation/>
- ❖ Write a letter to the state:  
<http://www.lovelafayette.org/modules/showdocument.aspx?documentid=2417>

## LEARN MORE:

1. [http://www.cawrecycles.org/issues/plastic\\_campaign/plastic\\_bags/local](http://www.cawrecycles.org/issues/plastic_campaign/plastic_bags/local)
2. <http://people.howstuffworks.com/how-many-cities-have-a-ban-on-plastic-bags.htm>
3. <http://edition.cnn.com/2009/WORLD/americas/08/19/mexico.plastic.bag.ban/index.html>

## WAYS YOU CAN HELP:

1. [Bring Your Own Bag](#) - Use reusable bags in lieu of single-use plastic or paper bags.
2. Send a letter of support to your local elected officials and/or attend a [City Council Meeting](#).
3. Sign the [petition](#).

