



Banning Single-Use Plastic Bags

Single-use, disposable plastic bags plague our waterways, oceans and natural environments, causing immeasurable harm to marine species and communities worldwide. The Central Coast Sanctuary Alliance supports bans on all single-use plastic bags and a fee on single-use paper bags in every county and municipality around the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary.



Know Your Facts:

- Californians use 19 billion plastic bags every year, amounting to nearly 150,000 tons of waste, the majority of which ends up in our landfills, rivers, bays and ocean.
- Only 5-10% of plastic bags are recycled in California.
- Plastic bags clog and slow recycling sorting machines making them a costly and inconvenient problem for recycling centers.
- Coastal Cleanup Day Stats: In 2009, 71,336 plastic bags were removed in California. Internationally in 2008, over 1.4 million plastic bags were removed. In 2008, in the San Francisco Bay alone, 15,000 plastic bags were removed.
- 49 Marine Animals were found entangled in plastic bag pollution during California Coastal Cleanup Day 2009 (6 Amphibians, 19 Birds, 11 Fish, 6 Invertebrates, 6 Mammals, and 1 Reptile).
- Save Our Shores volunteers removed over 25,000 plastic bags from local rivers & beaches since April, 2007.
- Plastic bags never fully biodegrade, they break down into tiny pieces which attract and accumulate toxins that then enter the ocean food chain.
- Plastic bags are manufactured from polyethylene, a byproduct of petroleum and natural gas. Both are non-renewable resources that create greenhouse gases and sustain our dependence on foreign oil.
- Californians pay up to \$200 per household each year in state and local fees to clean up litter and waste associated with single-use plastic bags.
- California's ocean economy alone is valued at \$43 billion.



Mother otter at Moss Landing Harbor in Moss Landing, CA tries to free her pup from a plastic bag.

Photo by Terry McCormac



**Numerous counties & cities
in California have already
adopted bans on
single-use plastic bags:**

County of Marin-January 2011
City of Santa Monica-January 2011
City of Long Beach-December 2010
City of San Jose- December 2010
County of Los Angeles-November 2010
City of Palo Alto-March 2009
City of Los Angeles-July 2008
City of Manhattan Beach-July 2008
 (suspended by suit)
City of Malibu-May 2008
City of Oakland-July 2007
 (suspended by suit)
City of Fairfax-August 2007
City of San Francisco-March 2007

Cities of Santa Cruz, Capitola, Glendale, Arcata, Sunnyvale, Santa Barbara, St. Helena, and the Counties of Santa Cruz, Marin & Alameda are all moving towards plastic bag bans.

**Visit
saveourshores.org/sanctuaryalliance
for more information**

What Else You Should Know About Bag Bans:

- In Los Angeles County, over 90% of plastic bags collected in surveyed municipalities were shipped to a landfill rather than recycled, due to contamination and tendency to clog machinery.
- Bag Ban Ordinances include exemptions for low-income shoppers and those using food stamps.
- Despite scare tactics orchestrated by the American Chemistry Council (ACC), bacteria and germs found in reusable bags are far less a threat than petroleum dependence and plastic pollution. Bacteria and germs are found everywhere and on everything.
- The latest scare tactic against reusable bags is that a small percentage of cheaply manufactured bags from China contain unsafe levels of lead. It is recommended that consumers avoid all cheaply manufactured products from China, such as children's toys, teethingers, and paints, due to health concerns. Lead is not easily transferred from a reusable bag insert to an apple, though, and we recommend consumers do not eat cheaply manufactured reusable bags.

