



For Immediate Release:

‘A DAY WITHOUT A BAG’ GREENS HOLIDAYS

Major retailers, cities hand out free reusable bags at more than 50 L.A. locations on Dec. 17

LOS ANGELES, Calif. (Wednesday, December 9, 2009) – Southland shoppers will receive an early holiday present on Thursday, Dec. 17, courtesy of a giveaway of nearly 20,000 reusable bags at more than 50 locations throughout Los Angeles County.

A unique coalition of major retailers, local governments and regional environmental groups has formed to organize the third annual “A Day Without a Bag,” which urges consumers to forego environmentally harmful one-use plastic or paper grocery bags in favor of reusable totes.

Dozens of community groups, from soccer clubs in Highland Park to Girl Scout troops in Agoura Hills, will be conducting bag giveaways and grassroots education for consumers throughout the region. The event, organized by environmental group Heal the Bay, is sponsored by the city and county of Los Angeles.

The city and county will distribute free reusable bags to patrons at high-profile shopping centers throughout the region. A diverse mix of retailers is scheduled to support the Dec. 17 event through in-store promotions or giveaways at stores countywide, including the Albertsons, Ralphs, 99 Cents Only, Bed Bath & Beyond chains. Local retailers Fred Segal Santa Monica and the Banana Republic’s Third Street Promenade store will also be participating.

For a Google map of all giveaway sites go to <http://healthebay.org/nobagday/2009/baggiveaways.asp>

A public awareness campaign about the economic and ecological benefits of reusable bags is being aimed at county residents, who use more than 6 billion disposable plastic shopping bags each year.

The county’s “Brag About Your Bag” campaign began on Nov. 15 and will distribute more than 50,000 bags at dozens of supermarkets leading up to “A Day Without a Bag.” The county has been holding numerous giveaways and contests for citizens. Grand prizes, including a lunch with Lakers forward and campaign spokesman Luke Walton, will be announced at Heal the Bay’s “A Day Without a Bag” media event in downtown Los Angeles on Dec. 17.

More than 70 of the county’s 88 cities have officially endorsed the “A Day Without a Bag” or “Brag About Your Bag” campaigns.

“This year we have more than doubled the number of cities in the county that are supporting ‘A Day Without a Bag,’” said Mark Gold, president of Heal the Bay. “It reflects the growing groundswell in Los Angeles for reusable bags, which not only save the environment but taxpayer dollars as well, especially in a time of drastic budget shortfalls.”

California municipalities spend nearly \$25 million each year just to collect and dispose of plastic bag waste. Less than 5% of plastic grocery bags are recycled each year in Los Angeles, so the remainder clogs precious landfill, litters public spaces and harms animal life when the bags infiltrate waterways.

Earthwise Bag Co. leads the list of companies that have generously provided thousands of reusable bags for distribution at sites countywide.

Spurred by the success of previous Heal the Bay events, community groups throughout the state launched their own “A Day Without a Bag” campaigns. Outreach programs have been held in San Diego, Orange County, Ventura, Santa Barbara and San Francisco counties.

Many progressive local governments countywide have already taken action or are exploring policies to curb the use of plastic bags. The cities of Santa Monica, Malibu and Manhattan Beach have adopted pending ordinances that prohibit retail establishments, restaurants and vendors from providing single-use plastic bags to customers.

The Los Angeles City Council has voted to ban plastic bags by Jan. 1, 2010 if a statewide user-fee on plastic or paper bags has not been established by that time.

Paper bags, while biodegradable, still require vast amounts of fossil fuels and water to produce, distribute and collect for disposal. *For more information on costs of disposable bags:*
www.healthebay.org/nobagday

Heavy-duty reusable bags are convenient, environmentally friendly alternatives that have been embraced by millions around the world. Ireland has been able to reduce its use of disposable grocery bags by 90% since 2001 via public programs.

About Heal the Bay

Heal the Bay is dedicated to making Santa Monica Bay and Southern California coastal waters safe and healthy again for people and marine life. It is one of the largest non-profit environmental organizations in Los Angeles County, with more than 12,000 members. The organization focuses on education, outreach, research and advocacy through programs like Coastal Cleanup Day each September and the Santa Monica Pier Aquarium. Beach Report Card weekly and annual updates are available at www.healthebay.org

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