



MALIBU VOTES TO BAN PLASTIC BAGS

City council takes Southland's most decisive step to protect environment

Malibu, CA (Tuesday, May 13, 2008) -- The Malibu City Council voted unanimously Monday night to ban retailers from distributing single-use plastic shopping bags within city limits, joining dozens of other progressive cities that have recently moved to curb the proliferation of wasteful packaging.

Malibu's ban is the most aggressive action to date on plastic bags by any Southland city, as it applies to all retailers, from grocery stores to small boutiques. It forbids the distribution of both plastic and compostable carryout bags.

Grocery stores, food vendors, restaurants, pharmacies and city facilities have six months to comply with the ordinance. Smaller sized retailers have one year until the measure is operative. The City Council also directed staff to research imposing fees on paper bags, in a bid to drive consumer adoption of more sustainable reusable bags.

Regional environmental group Heal the Bay provided input to city staff that drafted the approved measure as part of its yearlong fight to promote the use of reusable shopping bags statewide. One-use plastic bags clog landfills, foul our public spaces, waste energy and threaten marine life. California taxpayers spend more than \$25 million a year to collect and dispose of the 19 billion one-use plastic shopping bags distributed annually.

"The city of Malibu should be commended for taking decisive action to protect the environment and improve residents' quality of life," said Sarah Abramson, Heal the Bay's director of coastal resources. "Hopefully other cities are taking notice and now realize that the writing is on the wall for plastic bags."

More than two dozen nations and metropolitan areas have recently enacted limited bans on plastic bags, including China, San Francisco and Paris. Santa Monica officials are now drafting an ordinance that would forbid the distribution of all single-use plastic shopping bags within city limits and require that store owners charge shoppers a fee if they request a paper bag.

The Malibu measure was broadly supported by the local community, including the Malibu Surfing Association, Malibu Green Teens, Surfrider Foundation and other citizen groups.

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