



For Immediate Release:

‘DAY WITHOUT A BAG’ GREENS HOLIDAYS

Major retailers, cities hand out free reusable bags at more than 75 L.A. locations on Dec. 18

LOS ANGELES, CA (Thursday, December 18, 2008) – Southland shoppers will receive an early holiday present today, courtesy of a giveaway of more than 25,000 environmentally friendly reusable bags at more than 75 locations throughout Los Angeles County.

A unique coalition of major retailers, local governments and regional environmental groups have banded to organize the second annual “Day Without a Bag,” which urges consumers to forego 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 Malibu, will be conducting bag giveaways and grassroots environmental education to consumers throughout the region. The event, organized by environmental organization Heal the Bay, is sponsored by the city and county of Los Angeles.

“It’s not just paper or plastic anymore,” said Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa. “Consumers need to know that their actions have consequences on our environment and that they have a choice. We can make Los Angeles a sustainable city if we all make the right choices.”

Mayor Villaraigosa, Los Angeles County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky and Los Angeles City Councilman Greig Smith were scheduled to help Green Santa distribute hundreds of bags to patrons at the Northridge Fashion Center mall this morning.

“This is a great day to start breaking the plastic bag habit,” said Yaroslavsky. “And I can think of no better gift to the environment than picking up that friendly alternative, the reusable bag, a gift that keeps giving every time you use it.”

Distribution sites were to be hosted by Supervisor Gloria Molina’s office throughout her district, as well as by L.A. City Councilman Ed Reyes in the Cypress Park area. The mayor of Huntington Park hosted a 1 p.m. giveaway at the city’s bustling shopping district. (For a list of all sites and community partners go to <http://healthebay.org/nobagday/2008/baggiveaways.asp>)

“We have nearly quadrupled the number of giveaway sites for this year’s ‘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.”

A diverse mix of retailers is supporting the day through in-store promotions or giveaways at stores countywide, including the Ralphs, 99 Cents Only, Whole Foods, Albertsons Sav-on, Vons and Bed Bath & Beyond chains. In all, hundreds of local outlets will be participating.

“Ralphs is proud to take part in the Day Without a Bag program,” said Mike Donnelly, president of Ralphs Supermarkets. “With the community, we can make a positive impact on our environment in our continued efforts to give back to the neighborhoods in which we serve.”

Earthwise Bag Co. leads the list of companies that have generously provided thousands of reusable bags for distribution at sites countywide. A public awareness campaign about the economic and ecological benefits of reusable bags will be aimed at county residents, who use more than 6 billion disposable plastic shopping bags each year.

Spurred by the success of last year’s inaugural event, community groups throughout the state are launching their own “Day Without a Bag” campaigns. Outreach programs are being held today for the first time in San Diego, Orange County, Ventura, Santa Barbara and San Francisco counties.

California municipalities spend nearly \$25 million each year just to collect and dispose of plastic bag waste. Fewer 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.

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

The City of Los Angeles has committed to ban plastic bags by 2010 if a statewide fee has not been established by that time. Heal the Bay is sponsoring AB68, which was recently introduced by Assemblymember Julia Brownley. In a bid to encourage the use of reusable bags, the bill would require a 25-cent fee on both plastic and paper single-use bags.

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 [go here](#)*)

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 the coalition

The following municipalities are officially participating in or supporting “A Day Without a Bag”: Agoura Hills, Arcadia, Avalon, Baldwin Park, Bell Gardens, Bellflower, Beverly Hills, Burbank, Calabasas, Carson, Compton, Covina, Culver City, El Monte, El Segundo, Hermosa Beach, Inglewood, Lomita, Long Beach, Los Angeles, Lynwood, Malibu, Manhattan Beach, Norwalk, Redondo Beach, Rolling Hills Estates, Santa Clarita, Santa Monica, Signal Hill, South El Monte, Walnut and West Hollywood.

The following businesses have also provided reusable bags or special promotions: 1 Bag at a Time, ChicoBags, Go-Again Bags, The Inconvenient Bag and West 19th, as well as the Banana Republic store on Third Street Promenade in Santa Monica.

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