

## Plastic bag ban in high-desert discount grocery store

By Mariel Garza LA Daily News

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The last thing I expected to see in the high-desert town of Twentynine Palms last weekend was some environmental innovation in what's coming to seem like The Great Plastic Bag Fight of the `Teens.

But there I was in a Save A Lot store along Highway 62 watching a man who looked like a former marine and a current NRA member stacking his purchased groceries in his shopping cart - sans plastic bags. He wasn't the only one. It seems that this grocery store, a staple of working-class Inland Empire neighborhoods, has found a new way to sell a plastic-bag ban to consumers: saving money.

When I noticed the lack of checkout bags, I immediately thought of the many efforts to fight plastic bags in L.A. County: the ban in the unincorporated county, the recent ban in Long Beach and the pending proposal to ban free single-use bags in L.A. city.

"Is this a city thing?" I asked the cheerful checker, who reminded me a great deal of Heather, the vivacious teenage Mormon (played by Tina Majorino) in "Big Love."

"No it's a Save A Lot thing," she said. The company found a new way to save money by cutting the cost of providing plastic bags, which she noted, were figured into the cost of the goods.

When you put it that way, it's hard not to agree that those thin plastic bags are unnecessary. Plus, the cardboard boxes that once held the off-brand foods that Save A Lot is famous for were free for us to use. We took one.

This also explained the counter against the wall directly in front of the checkout lanes, under which were stacked a bunch of used boxes. It was a place for customers to fill their reusable bags or one of the spare boxes.

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