

Judge denies challenge to SLO County bag ban

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A San Luis Obispo Superior Court judge has denied a challenge to San Luis Obispo County's ban on plastic bags, finding that evidence submitted by Save the Plastic Bag Coalition to counter the new rules "falls short of the mark."

Judge Charles Crandall's ruling — issued Monday, the same day the ban went into effect — leaves San Luis Obispo County's outlawing of plastic bags at many stores intact.

The coalition, described in Crandall's ruling as an unincorporated association of plastic bag manufacturers and distributors, alleged the county Integrated Waste Management Authority should have prepared a detailed analysis of the environmental impact of the new requirement before enacting the ban.

In August, Crandall asked Stephen Joseph, a San Francisco attorney for the plastic bag coalition, to submit specific evidence showing that the unusual nature of the county's ordinance might cause environmental harm. In previous interviews, Joseph described the coalition as a nonprofit environmental organization.

However, the evidence submitted pertains to other areas of the United States or other countries and does not specifically address the San Luis Obispo County ordinance, Crandall wrote.

The waste management authority's decision not to conduct further environmental review was appropriate, he concluded.