

## L.A. Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa signs plastic bag ban, finishes term with a flourish

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Posted: 06/26/2013 06:21:20 PM PDT

Updated: 06/26/2013 06:27:38 PM PDT

With only a few days left in his term, Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa is continuing with a flurry of activity, signing the city's plastic bags ban on Wednesday, pushing to wrap up other major initiatives and planning a whirlwind citywide tour on Friday.

From 6 a.m. Friday through 6 a.m. Saturday, Villaraigosa said he will travel throughout the city to thank residents for the opportunity he was given to serve as mayor. His staff was still developing details on where exactly he will stop on the tour.

"A lot of people scoffed when I said I would work up to the last minute of the last day," Villaraigosa said. "I said there would be no lame duck in this administration and there won't be."

Villaraigosa said he did not feel any particular pressure to wrap up major initiatives in his last week in office, but said the issues have been coming together over the past several weeks.

Among them: taking the city off coal power by 2025; converting street lamps to LED bulbs; launching a solar feed-in tariff program on Wednesday; starting a new parks program; and previewing the Tom Bradley International Terminal at LAX last Saturday.

At a City Hall news conference Wednesday, Villaraigosa signed the measure banning single-use plastic bags, calling it another example of the city setting a higher standard.

"This will make for a cleaner, greener L.A.," Villaraigosa said. "Every year, we use 2 billion bags. That's 5 million bags a day and only 5 percent of them are recycled. This is one more step to make us the cleanest, greenest city in the United States."

The ban takes effect on Jan. 1, 2014, at an estimated 2,000 large markets and stores where food is sold. Another 5,000 smaller stores will be required to comply by July 1, 2014. Residents failing to bring in reusable bags can be charged up to 10 cents for each paper bag. The stores will retain that money.

In the meantime, the city Bureau of Sanitation will launch an education program and distribute 1 million bags to residents.

Mark Daniels, chair of the American Progressive Bag Alliance, said the organization believes the mayor and City Council have ignored the facts.

"The move limits consumer choice, increases consumer grocery bills, kills local jobs and will do more harm to the environment than good," Daniels said.

Daniels said his organization will work to try to change public opinion to force a reversal of the plastic bag ban.

Villaraigosa was joined by Councilman Paul Koretz, who began working on the proposal when he was in the state Assembly. They said it was time for the state to take action to have a statewide ban on the bags.

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