

# Gov. Brown signs phase-out of single-use plastic bags in stores

California supermarkets and other outlets will be banned from using single-use plastic bags starting in July 2015.

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**G**ov. Jerry Brown on Tuesday fulfilled a promise by signing a measure that will phase out single-use plastic bags from checkout stands at California supermarkets, convenience stores, liquor stores and pharmacies.

California is the first state in the nation to enact such a ban at the state level, creating a statewide standard after 127 cities and counties in California, including the city of Los Angeles, have adopted local bag ordinances.

"This bill is a step in the right direction — it reduces the torrent of plastic polluting our beaches, parks and even the vast ocean itself," Brown said in a statement. "We're the first to ban these bags, and we won't be the last."

Brown had promised during a gubernatorial debate earlier this month that he would sign the bill, noting that, with many cities having adopted their own rules, "that's causing a lot of confusion."

The measure by Sen. Alex Padilla (D-Pacoima) prohibits, beginning July 1, grocery stores and pharmacies from making available single-use plastic bags. Stores will offer paper and reusable plastic bags for at least 10 cents each. On July 1, 2016, the ban will extend to convenience and liquor stores. Local ordinances are grandfathered in and the state will provide \$2 million in competitive loans to help plastic-bag businesses transition to making reusable bags. "

"A throwaway society is not sustainable," Padilla said Tuesday. "This new law will greatly reduce the flow of billions of single-use plastic bags that litter our communities and harm our environment each year."

The approval of the bill disappointed Lee Califf, executive director of the American Progressive Bag Alliance, an industry group that warned the ban will cost thousands of jobs and enrich grocers collecting 10-cents a bag.

"The approval of SB 270 by the California Legislature and Gov. Jerry Brown could serve as a case study for what happens when greedy special interests and bad government collide in the policymaking process," Calif said in a statement.

The alliance said it will launch a petition drive to qualify a referendum to repeal SB 270 on the November 2016 ballot. If it collects 504,760 signatures in the next 90 days to qualify the referendum, the new law would be suspended until the 2016 vote.

"Sen. Padilla's bill was never legislation about the environment. It was a backroom deal between the grocers and union bosses to scam California consumers out of billions of dollars without providing any public benefit — all under the guise of environmentalism," Calif said.

Single-use bags are also banned throughout Hawaii but that is because of ordinances adopted by local jurisdictions, not the state.

"This is a compromise," Brown said during the debate. "It's taking into account the needs of the environment, and the needs of the economy and the needs of the grocers."

The bill was also supported by environmental groups. "California policy makers have made a clear and strong statement in enacting the bag ban: Producers are responsible for the end of life of their products," said Mark Murray, executive director of Californians Against Waste.