

## Waste & Recycling News

# Los Angeles to become largest city in U.S. to ban plastic bags

By Kerri Jansen By

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The Los Angeles City Council on June 18 adopted an ordinance banning the use of plastic bags at grocery stores, pharmacies, convenience stores and some retailers in the city.

The decision follows a [May 2012 City Council vote](#) to phase out single-use plastic grocery bags. It has taken a year to complete an Environmental Impact Report required by the state. The City Council approved the EIR and adopted the ordinance and Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa is expected to sign the measure.

Los Angeles would be the largest city in the U.S. to implement a single-use bag ban, bringing the number of California residents living in an area with a bag ban up to 13 million, said Mark Murray, executive director of [Californians Against Waste](#).

"In 2014, one-third of Californians are going to be living in a jurisdiction where single-use plastic grocery bags are banned," Murray told Waste & Recycling News. "Whether the state legislature decides to take that on or not, 13 million Californians will live in communities where there are no more plastic bags. That's more people that live in most states."

Only four states have more than 13 million people: California, Texas, New York and Florida.

Under the ordinance, large stores will be prohibited from distributing single-use plastic bags to customers starting Jan. 1, 2014. Infractions could result in fines of up to \$500. Plastic bags will be banned at smaller stores starting July 1, 2014.

Paper bags and thicker plastic bags will still be allowed. The ban does not affect restaurants, produce bags and food packaging.

"I think you can't ignore, the plastics industry can't ignore and other communities can't ignore, that this is coming," Murray said.

A second and final reading of the bill is expected next week, when it will be sent to Villaraigosa.

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