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Dana Point Passes a Plastic Bag Ban

by Andrea Swayne

03.09.12 - 05:09 pm

City Council on March 6 voted 4-1 to approve an ordinance banning point of sale distribution of single-use plastic shopping bags at retail establishments.

Councilman Bill Brough cast the lone “No” vote as he had in the two initial votes on the way to the ban’s final adoption.

A few main modifications were added to the ordinance including an 18-month compliance exemption period for small businesses with annual taxable revenues under \$4 million, a 12-month grace period for businesses earning over \$4 million, as well as the removal of the word “restaurant.”

The Save the Plastic Bag Coalition has challenged bans in other California cities and threatened to file a lawsuit against the city and on the basis that states, not cities, regulate restaurants.

Council chose to follow the lead of Santa Cruz and Laguna Beach by revising the ordinance to exempt restaurants.

The ordinance will officially take effect April 5; 30 days from Tuesday night’s final approval.

Due to the addition of grace periods, the operative dates will be April 1, 2013 for retail establishments with over \$4 million in sales and for all other affected retail establishments, October 1, 2013.

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