

Ashley Smith, 29, of Sacramento said she favors banning plastic bags, even though she reuses her plastic bags to pick up after her dog.

"It's good to do things that are good for the environment," Smith said as she left a [Safeway](#) grocery store in Sacramento.

Requiring stores to charge customers for paper bags is a cost Republican lawmakers argued some Californians can't afford.

"This is not the time to be putting a financial burden on families in a very tough economy," said Assemblyman Ted Gaines, R-Granite Bay, who estimated his family would spend \$50 a year on paper bags.

The American Chemistry Council estimates the bill would amount to a \$1 billion tax and threaten 500 jobs in the plastic bag manufacturing business.

The measure has the support of the California Grocers Association, which decided to the back the bill after Brownley agreed to subject all stores that sell groceries to the ban.

It also gives grocery stores one set of rules to follow rather than a patchwork of local ordinances, said Dave Heylen, spokesman for the association.

"As more and more cities started looking at this, each one would tweak it one way or another and that was extremely difficult for those retailers who have stores in multiple cities and counties," Heylen said.

The bill would require stores to sell reusable bags beginning Jan. 1, 2012. Stores could charge no less than 5 cents for recycled paper bags if customers don't have their own bag.

Sacramento shopper Brett Akacin, 37, said he recycles his plastic bags and that it would be a burden to carry a disposable bag. California grocery stores are required under current law to collect used plastic bags that customers return to the store to recycle.

"It's a hassle. I don't want to carry my own bag all the time with me. I go into the store randomly, and I don't like to pay extra for a bag," said Akacin, who had two bags of groceries. "I think it's the store's responsibility."

Associated Press Writers Judy Lin and Robin Hindery in Sacramento and Lisa Leff in San Francisco contributed to this report.