



Ojai, Calif., passes plastic bag ban

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PLASTICS NEWS STAFF

WASHINGTON (April 12, 2:15 p.m. ET) -- After three revisions, the city of Ojai in California has unanimously passed a ban on single-use plastic bags and enacted a 10-cent fee on all paper bags.

The plastic bag ban, approved April 10, includes bio-based plastic bags and applies to all retailers except restaurants. It is scheduled to go into effect July 1, with an exemption for paper and plastic bags used for fresh produce and meat.

It is the first plastic bag ban in Ventura County and brings the number of communities in California with plastic bag bans to 44.

The fee on paper bags in Ojai does not apply to all retailers. Only grocery stores, supermarkets, convenience stores, liquor stores and gasoline mini-marts in Ojai—a town of 7,500 people that is 33 miles east of Santa Barbara and 21 miles north of Ventura—will be required to charge customers 10 cents for paper bags handed out at checkout.

Those retailers will be required to keep the monies collected from that fee, and not rebate them to consumers in any fashion.

In an attachment to the bill, the city said that it adopted the fee on recycled paper carryout bags because it “encourages the use of reusable bags.”

Also, Bainbridge Island, Wash., a bedroom island that's a 35-minute ferry ride west of Seattle, has also banned plastic bags and placed a 5-cent fee on paper bags, effective Nov. 1.

Altogether, 58 cities and 12 counties in the U.S. have adopted plastic bag bans. In addition, Montgomery County, Md., and Washington, D.C., have a 5-cent fee on plastic bags handed out at retail, and Basalt, Colo., has a 20-cent fee on plastic bags.

Three of the nation's 14 largest cities now have bans on plastic bags: San Jose (10), San Francisco (13) and Austin (14). In addition, Seattle and Portland, Ore.,—the 23rd- and 29th-largest cities in the United States— also have plastic bag bans.

However, the Save the Plastic Bag Coalition has lawsuits pending to overturn the plastic bag bans in Carpinteria, Calif.; San Luis Obispo County; Marin County; as well as the recent expansion of the San Francisco plastic bag ban to include restaurants.

Austin and Carpinteria are the only communities in the U.S that have bans on both plastic and paper bags. The Carpinteria ban is scheduled to go into effect July 11 for retailers with \$5 million or more in sales.

The Austin ban, scheduled to go into effect next March 1, does not apply to laundry dry-cleaning bags, door-knob hanger bags, newspaper bags, or bags used for bulk food or other grocery items. It also allows retailers to provide single-use plastic bags for restaurant carryout items, for prescription drugs, and for beer, wine and spirits.

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