

South Pasadena's plastic bag ban goes into effect Monday



In this May 8, 2014 file photo, a man carries goods in plastic bags as he shops at the South Pasadena Farmers' Market. The farmers market and other large retailers such as Ralphs, Trader Joe's and Vons will be affected by a plastic bag ban that goes into effect on Monday, Oct. 6, 2014. (Photo by Sarah Reingewirtz/Pasadena Star-News/File)

By [Zen Vuong](#), Pasadena Star-News

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Phase I

- Big Lots
- Bristol Farms
- Orchard Supply Hardware
- Pavilions
- Ralphs

- Rite Aid
- Trader Joe's
- Vons
- South Pasadena Farmers Market

Phase II

- Foremost Liquor Store
- Ocean Liquor Store

SOUTH PASADENA >> People who shop in South Pasadena need to remember to bring their reusable bags along when they go to grocery stores, retail shops and the farmers market starting Monday, even though California's plastic bag ban will not go into effect until 2015.

Five months ago, the City Council [passed an ordinance](#) that would prohibit Big Lots, Bristol Farms, Orchard Supply Hardware, Pavilions, Ralphs, Rite Aid, Trader Joe's, Vons and the South Pasadena Farmers' Market from supplying consumers with single-use plastic bags beginning Oct. 6.

“What the ordinance does is try to [influence behavior change](#),” City Manager Sergio Gonzalez said. “We know that plastic bags and plastic in general ends up in our waterways and ends up being in the ocean, and this is one way to reduce what we consider pollution — encourage not using single-use bags.”

Plastic bags without handles such as the ones used for fruits, vegetables and meat will still be available for free. The plastic bag ban will affect Foremost Liquor Store and Ocean Liquor Store starting Dec. 6.

If people need a sack to carry their purchase home, they will need to pay 10 cents each for paper bags at the affected stores.

Resident Sandra Kay Lee said she's very unhappy the City Council approved this inconvenient policy. It's good to be environmentally-friendly, but people should be able to decide for themselves, she said. As a result, she said she will shop at the Albertsons in Alhambra until the statewide plastic bag ban goes into effect.

The new policy may have an unintended side effect, Lee said.

“When they have the no (plastic) bag policy, it's easier for people to shoplift because what happens is that when they shop, how do you prove that they didn't bring it in already? They're walking out without a bag,” she said. “You have to have a guard stand there and make sure you have a receipt to mark things off. ... Usually the proof is the bags.”

South Pasadena bought about 2,000 reusable, cloth bags that have been and will continue to be distributed for free to the community at affected locations, spokeswoman Debby Figoni said. People could also pick up the free sacks while supplies last at City Hall or at the South Pasadena Senior Center, she said.

City staff have spent time educating affected stores and have put informational fliers up in City Hall, the library and the senior center, Figoni said. Notice of the change has been emailed to residents, posted on the city's website and included in newspapers, she said.

"We just want people to not be upset when (the ban) starts," she said. "Plastic bags are made of petroleum, a non-renewable resource. Plastic does not biodegrade. Each year over a million birds and sea mammals die from plastic ingestion and entanglement."

Nothing about the change was posted on South Pasadena's Facebook or Twitter accounts as of 11 a.m. Thursday.

Some [127 California cities or counties](#) are already covered by plastic bag ban ordinances, according to Californians Against Waste. Participating cities include Pasadena, Glendale, Long Beach, Culver City and Monrovia.

Fernando Nunez, store manager at South Pasadena's Big Lots, said city staff have been very helpful during the transition period. Free bags will be passed out in front of his store on Sunday, he said.

"I'm sure we're going to get some customers who are going to be questioning, 'Oh, you guys don't have bags anymore,'" he said. "Some people are going to have a negative reaction in the beginning, but after a while, people are going to change."

The city attorney will see if California's plastic bag ban — the nation's first statewide ban on single-use plastic bags — has any effect on the city's ordinance, Gonzalez said.

About the Author



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