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MARGARET CLARK, VICE - CHAIR

LOS ANGELES COUNTY
SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE/
INTEGRATED WASTE MANAGEMENT TASK FORCE
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April 2, 2013

The Honorable Wesley Chesbro, Chair
Assembly Natural Resources Committee
1020 N Street, Room 164
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Assemblymember Chesbro:

**ASSEMBLY BILL 158 (AMENDED MARCH 20, 2013)
SOLID WASTE: SINGLE-USE CARRYOUT BAGS**

The Los Angeles County Solid Waste Management Committee/Integrated Waste Management Task Force (Task Force) **supports** Assembly Bill 158 (AB 158) as amended on March 20, 2013. If enacted, AB 158 would prohibit a store from providing a plastic carryout bag to a customer while establishing a statewide uniform standard for carryout bags to be labeled as “reusable”.

Pursuant to Chapter 3.67 of the Los Angeles County Code and the California Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989 (Assembly Bill 939 [AB 939], as amended), the Task Force is responsible for coordinating the development of all major solid waste planning documents prepared for the County of Los Angeles and the 88 cities in Los Angeles County with a combined population in excess of ten million. Consistent with these responsibilities and to ensure a coordinated, cost-effective, and environmentally sound solid waste management system in Los Angeles County, the Task Force also addresses issues impacting the system on a countywide basis. The Task Force membership includes representatives of the League of California Cities-Los Angeles County Division, County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors, City of Los Angeles, waste management industry, environmental groups, the public, and a number of other governmental agencies.

Each year, approximately 19 billion plastic carryout bags are consumed in California, the equivalent of 1,600 bags per household per year. Less than five percent of those bags are recycled with the remainder disposed in landfills or ending up littered on beaches, waterways, parks, and roads. Due to their lightweight nature, single-use plastic carryout bags are disproportionately more likely to end up as litter. Plastic bag litter makes up as much as 25 percent of the litter stream and significantly impact communities and the environment. In Los Angeles County alone, local and State governments spend tens of millions of dollars each year on litter prevention, stormwater infrastructure cleanup, and enforcement activities including single-use bag litter. In the last few years, more than 70 local governments throughout the State, including the

County of Los Angeles and City of Los Angeles, have voted to phase out the distribution of single-use plastic bags by supermarkets and other stores to their customers.

The Task Force has been supportive of these single-use plastic bag bans. While these efforts have become more common, many companies have looked to take advantage of the trend towards the usage of reusable bags by actively marketing their bags as “reusable”. However, there are bags that have been marketed as such that are sub-standard, failing to meet usage expectation and in some cases containing toxic levels of heavy metals. In light of these facts, there is a pressing need for a statewide uniform standard for a bag to be labeled as “reusable”.

The standards set forth in AB 158 are nearly identical to a number of local government ordinances, including that of Los Angeles County. Moreover, a statewide ban of plastic bags would even the playing field for stores and jurisdictions while increasing the State’s long-term environmental sustainability aspirations.

For these reasons, the Task Force **supports** AB 158. Should you have any questions please contact Mr. Mike Mohajer of the Task Force at (909) 592-1147 or MikeMohajer@yahoo.com.

Sincerely,



Margaret Clark, Vice-Chair
Los Angeles County Solid Waste Management Committee/
Integrated Waste Management Task Force and
Council Member, City of Rosemead

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cc: Assemblymember Marc Levine
Each Member of the Assembly Natural Resources Committee
Each Member of the Los Angeles County Legislative Delegation
Each Member of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors
California Association of Counties
League of California Cities
League of California Cities, Los Angeles County Division
San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments
South Bay Cities Council of Governments
San Fernando Valley Council of Governments
Gateway Cities Council of Governments
Westside Cities Council of Governments
Each City Mayor and City Manager in the County of Los Angeles
Each City Recycling Coordinator in Los Angeles County
Each Member of the Los Angeles County Integrated Waste Management Task Force