



GAIL FARBER, CHAIR
MARGARET CLARK, VICE - CHAIR

LOS ANGELES COUNTY
SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE/
INTEGRATED WASTE MANAGEMENT TASK FORCE
900 SOUTH FREMONT AVENUE, ALHAMBRA, CALIFORNIA 91803-1331
P.O. BOX 1460, ALHAMBRA, CALIFORNIA 91802-1460
www.lacountyiswmtf.org

March 17, 2014

The Honorable Alex Padilla
State Capitol, Room 4038
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Kevin de Leon
State Capitol, Room 5108
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Ricardo Lara
State Capitol, Room 5050
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Senators Padilla, de Leon, and Lara:

**SENATE BILL 270 (AMENDED FEBRUARY 6, 2014)
SOLID WASTE: SINGLE-USE CARRYOUT BAGS – SUPPORT IF AMENDED**

The Los Angeles County Solid Waste Management Committee/Integrated Waste Management Task Force (Task Force) **supports if amended** Senate Bill 270 (SB 270). If enacted, the proposed legislation would prohibit stores from providing a single-use plastic carryout bag to a customer while requiring stores to charge a fee for paper bags and establishing a Statewide quality standard for “reusable bags.”

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.

The Honorable Alex Padilla
The Honorable Kevin de Leon
The Honorable Ricardo Lara
March 17, 2014
Page 2

It is estimated that as many as 19 billion plastic carryout bags were consumed each year 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 impacts 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.

As a result of these disproportionate impacts, in the last few years approximately 100 municipalities 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 long been supportive of efforts that reduce litter and waste generation. SB 270 will accomplish this by encouraging residents to bring in reusable bags in lieu of paying for a recycled paper bag.

However, we would encourage the bill to be amended to be consistent with language incorporated into many local ordinances already adopted and enforced throughout the State in order to reduce confusion and ensure the State upholds the highest standards for reusable bags that are already quickly replacing single-use plastic bags. For instance, SB 270 requires reusable bags to be capable of holding two gallons of milk, while most local ordinances require a more regimented carrying capacity of 22 pounds, which many testing labs have already calibrated to test. Additionally, SB 270 does not require paper bags to certify that they don't contain old growth fiber, or that they are recyclable. Lastly, the bill makes reference to "compostable bags" and "compostable plastic bags" but does not make a distinction between the two. This is potentially confusing since paper bags are inherently compostable.

The Task Force is also concerned that SB 270 as written would prohibit a city and/or a county from adopting any "single-use carry out bag" ordinances, which may best address the local conditions. Additionally, the proposal would also preempt local jurisdictions with existing ordinances from making any changes to their ordinances other than adjustments to the minimum fee stores must charge for paper or reusable bags. The Task Force strongly believes that cities and counties are in the best position to develop ordinances managing single-use carryout bags while maintaining local authority with limited direction from the State.

The Honorable Alex Padilla
The Honorable Kevin de Leon
The Honorable Ricardo Lara
March 17, 2014
Page 3

For the reasons stated above, the Task Force **supports** SB 270 **if amended** to address the comments above. If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Mike Mohajer of the Task Force at MikeMohajer@yahoo.com or (909) 592-1147.

Sincerely,



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

GA:ts

P:\eppub\EnvAff\ENVIRO. AFFAIRS\TASK FORCE\Task Force\Letters\2014\SB_270_03-17-14.doc

cc: California State Association of Counties
League of California Cities
Each Member of the County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors
San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments
South Bay Cities 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 Member of Los Angeles County Integrated Waste Management Task Force