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

The Honorable Jerry Hill, Chair
Senate Environmental Quality Committee
State Capitol, Room 2205
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Senator Hill:

**SENATE BILL 529 (INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 21, 2013)
RECYCLING: FAST FOOD FACILITIES**

The Los Angeles County Integrated Waste Management Committee/Integrated Waste Management Task Force (Task Force) **supports, if amended**, Senate Bill 529 (SB 529). If enacted, the proposed legislation would prohibit a fast food facility from distributing disposable food service packaging or a single-use carry out bag to customer, unless the disposable food service packaging or single-use bag meets certain criteria for either compostable packaging or recyclable packaging. The Task Force is very supportive of the author's intention to reduce waste at its source; however, local governments have been moving forward to phase out the use of single-use plastic bags, regardless of their recyclable or compostable properties, and they continue to support Statewide efforts to do the same. It is important for SB 529 to be consistent with these efforts.

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.

Single-use 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, many jurisdictions have adopted local ordinances phasing out the use of such bags. The ordinances typically include a prohibition on compostable bags since typically these bags do not decompose for many years in the natural environment (e.g. if littered) but must be subject to conditions in a commercial composting operation to properly break down.


As mentioned above, the Task Force is very supportive of the author's intent to lessen the negative environmental impact of food packaging and single-use plastic bags. As indicated in the bill, fast food patrons are on the go but the unfortunate reality is that many of them will not properly dispose of their single-use plastic bags, which will invariably become litter. And as the author additionally contends, due to their lightweight nature, single-use plastic carryout bags are disproportionately more likely to end up as litter even when properly disposed. Compostable plastic bags are just as lightweight as non-compostable plastic bags and cost local jurisdictions just as much to remove from beaches, waterways, parks, and roads when they become litter.

The Task Force respectfully recommends SB 529 be amended to ensure it is consistent with local ordinances and any concurrent or future Statewide legislation (at least two bills are being considered in the current legislative session) that phases out the use of single-use plastic bags, including compostable bags, at certain stores. This would reduce the potential for conflicts and enhance the probability of realizing the main intent of the bill – to clear the State's public roadways, beaches, parks, and other areas of the State from plastic and other disposable food service packaging.

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Therefore, the Task Force **supports, if amended**, SB 529 to address the issues discussed above. If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Mike Mohajer of the Task Force at MikeMohajer@yahoo.com or at (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

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cc: Senator Mark Leno
Assembly Members Bloom, Chesbro and Williams
Each Member of the Senate Environmental Quality Committee
Each Member of the Los Angeles County Legislative Delegation
Each Member of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors
California State 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 Recycling Coordinator in Los Angeles County
Each City Mayor and City Manager in the County of Los Angeles
Each Member of the Los Angeles County Integrated Waste Management Task Force