



**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
AGENDA LETTER**

**Agenda Number:**

**Clerk of the Board of Supervisors**  
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101  
(805) 568-2240

**Department Name:** County Executive  
Office  
**Department No.:** 012  
**For Agenda Of:** August 20, 2024  
**Placement:** Administrative  
**Estimated Time:**  
**Continued Item:** N/A  
**If Yes, date from:** No  
**Vote Required:** Majority

**TO:** Board of Supervisors  
**FROM:** Department Legislative Program Committee  
Director(s)  
Contact Info: Jasmine McGinty, Legislative Coordinator

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**SUBJECT: Adopt a Resolution of Support for AB 2236 and SB 1053**

**County Counsel Concurrence**

As to form: Yes

Other Concurrence:

As to form: N/A

**Auditor-Controller Concurrence**

As to form: N/A

**Recommended Actions:**

It is recommended that the Board of Supervisors:

- a) Adopt a Resolution of Support for AB 2236 and SB 1053 related to banning plastic bags; and
- b) Determine that the above actions are not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), because pursuant to section 15378(b)(5) of the CEQA Guidelines the actions consist of organizational or administrative activities of government that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment.

**Summary:**

This item is on the agenda to request a resolution from the Board of Supervisors in support of two bills related to banning plastic bags, for which the County previously sent letters of support. The request for a resolution comes from the UCSB chapter of CALPIRG, through the Second District office. During the July 22 Special Legislative Program Committee (LPC) Meeting, the LPC considered the request to consider a Resolution of Support for AB 2236 and SB 1052 and approved the request with recommendation to the full Board. The County has taken support positions on both bills as they are supported through the 2024 Legislative Platform through the Community Sustainability and Environmental Protection Plank.

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### **Discussion:**

The request for a resolution of support came from the UCSB chapter of CALPIRG, through the District 2 office. The California Public Interest Research Group (CALPIRG)'s UCSB chapter is a public interest activism group that provides training, professional support and resources to students to help protect the environment, provide hunger relief, and promote civic engagement. The chapter is entirely student funded and governed. CALPIRG's work has been endorsed by California's Secretary for Natural Resources, UC Chancellors, including Chancellor Yang, and City Councilmembers from across the state.

CALPIRG is working on a campaign to update California's statewide plastic bag ban law to ban all plastic carryout bags at grocery stores, retail stores, and restaurants, including the thick plastic bags that are common at many stores. This group has been working with Senators Allen and Blakespear and Assemblymember Bauer-Kahan to pass legislation that would close the loophole in the law that allows plastic bag companies to mass produce thicker plastic bags that the industry claims are exempt from the law because they technically can be reused.

The County of Santa Barbara Resource Recovery and Waste Management Division (RRWM) of Public Works have reviewed both bills and are generally in support of the bills. Staff worked closely with RRWM when preparing letters of support for AB 2236 and SB 1053. According to the Resource Recovery and Waste Management Division (RRWM), the pollution potential of plastic bags is high. When littered, plastic bags persist in the environment for hundreds of years. When they eventually break down, they spread numerous microplastics throughout the environment. Whole plastic bags and shredded plastic bag remnants are easily ingested by wildlife, such as sea turtles, birds, and fish. When other animals hunt and feed on these animals, these plastic particles travel up the food chain and eventually bioaccumulate into increasingly harmful amounts, poisoning predatory animals as well. Littered plastic bags can also impede plant growth, are costly to clean up, and contribute to blight.

In addition, during the Legislative Program Committee meeting on July 22, 2024, Supervisor Williams requested that information on climate, waste and pollution impacts of paper and reusable bags, included below.

While the Resolution of Support on AB 2236 and SB 1053 is focused on plastic bags, the information below pertains to paper bag usage as well based on the LPC request. According to CALPIRG and the latest CalRecycle Report, (2021 waste data), there was 35,207 tons of paper bag waste that year. While a plastic bag ban will likely lead to more paper bag usage, paper bags are widely recyclable throughout the state, unlike plastic bags. However, California is better equipped for paper bag usage because of its robust recycling system for paper bags and the current ten cent fee may continue to encourage residents to bring their own reusable bag to the store. SB 1053 and AB 2236 would increase the minimum recycled content of paper bags provided in California to a 50% minimum.

In addition, Santa Barbara County has a robust organics recycling program that includes both clean and soiled paper bags. Combined with the County's traditional commingled recycling program that accepts clean paper bags, this program provides another way to divert paper bags from local landfills.

It is noted that the environmental impact of grocery bags, including single-use plastic or paper bags, and reusable plastic, polyester, or cotton bags is dependent on the energy use and intensity required to produce them, according to a report from the Environmental Agency of the UK (Attachment D). In this report, it notes that some "life cycle analysis" studies have found that the key to reducing the climate change impact of all grocery bags is to re-use them as much as possible. Some examples of re-using grocery bags include

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using them for multiple grocery trips and using them as trash bin liners. The Environmental Agency Report (Attachment D) also shows the number of times that a user would need to use each type of bag to have a lower climate impact than a plastic bag.

**Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:**

There is no fiscal impact with this item. AB 2236 and SB 1053 will require retailers/ grocers to be responsible to comply with the new requirements stated in the legislation including costs associated, beginning in 2026 if the bills pass.

**Authored by:**

Jasmine McGinty, Legislative Coordinator

**Attachments:**

Attachment A – Resolution of Support

Attachment B – AB 2236 Support Letter

Attachment C – SB 1053 Support Letter

Attachment D – Environmental Agency Report – Supermarket Bags