



# County of Santa Cruz

## BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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**MARK W. STONE**  
FIFTH DISTRICT

AGENDA: 11/3/09

October 27, 2009

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
County of Santa Cruz  
701 Ocean Street  
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Dear Members of the Board:

At the May 5, 2009, meeting, this Board unanimously passed a resolution to support the passage of AB 87, a State Assembly Bill that would discourage the single use of plastic and paper carry-out bags. While legislative action on this Bill has been held over to the 2010 session, I suggest that this Board consider local action that would address this issue in Santa Cruz County.

We who live here on the Central Coast are acutely aware that the casual discarding of plastic bags is a common and irritating source of environmental litter. Discarded single-use plastic bags are not only unsightly, but are a non-biodegradable hazard to wildlife, clogging rivers and streams and causing harm to ocean life. Of the 19 billion single-use plastic bags consumed annually statewide, fewer than 5% are recycled. Single-use paper bags also have a negative environmental impact in that they generate significantly more greenhouse gases and water pollution in their production than plastic bags.

In September this year, the San Jose City Council, following recommendations of the Santa Clara County Recycling and Waste Reduction Commission, voted to make San Jose the largest city in the nation to ban the use of most plastic and paper shopping bags. The ordinance, which will take effect in 2011, will first go through an Environmental Impact Study that will require final sign-off by the City Council. San Jose's action coincides with similar steps already taken by the Cities of San Francisco, Oakland, Fairfax, Los Angeles, Malibu, Manhattan Beach, and Palo Alto. San Jose will also bring other Santa Clara County cities along with them in a county-wide effort to address this major form of pollution.

Additionally, the Integrated Waste Management Local Task Force members and/or representatives in Santa Cruz County have completed significant work on this item to date, including research, an assessment of procedural measures available to local jurisdictions, public discussions, and a draft model ordinance. I believe the Local Task Force should work with the Commission on the Environment to coordinate a joint approach and recommendations regarding an ordinance to decrease or eliminate single-use bags at the point of sale.

I believe it is now time for Santa Cruz County to join with our neighbors in the banning of single-use plastic and carry-out paper bags.

Therefore, I recommend that the Board take the following actions:

1. Direct the Department of Public Works to take this issue to the Commission on the Environment with the request that the Commission look at the ordinances from nearby jurisdictions and make a recommendation to this Board for an ordinance that would address the following issues:
  - a. Any recommended ordinance should include all point of sale single-use bags at all retailers.
  - b. The intent is to eliminate single-use plastic bags and reduce reliance on single-use paper bags.
  - c. The Commission should also recommend outreach programs for Santa Cruz County
2. Direct that the Commission on the Environment and the Department of Public Works both work to ensure that this Board will have an ordinance to consider no later than April 20, 2010, which falls just before the 40th Anniversary of Earth Day on April 22, 2010.

Sincerely,



MARK W. STONE, Supervisor  
Fifth District

MWS:lg

cc: Public Works Department  
Commission on the Environment

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