

TOP 10 REASONS TO VOTE YES TO UPHOLD CALIFORNIA'S BAG BAN

On November 8, California voters have a chance to make history by becoming the first state in the nation to enact a comprehensive ban on single-use plastic bags.



1. They kill wildlife

Plastic pollution poses a deadly threat to over 663 species of marine animals. Each year, thousands of animals become entangled in plastic bags and drown, or ingest them and starve.¹



2. They poison the food chain

In the ocean, plastic bags break down into tiny pieces, which absorb large amounts of pollutants. These toxic pellets are then eaten by invertebrates and small fish that are in turn eaten by larger fish. Do you want to be eating these same fish?²



3. They are used for just a few minutes, but last a few lifetimes

A shopper will probably use a single-use plastic bag for less than 12 minutes.³ That bag, however, will remain in our environment for up to 1,000 years, and will never fully biodegrade.⁴



4. Less than 5% of plastic bags are recycled in California

The plastic bag industry may say recycling is the answer, but that's simply not the case. The tiny fraction of bags that do make it to recycling plants frequently cause costly machine failures and yield very little usable material.⁵



5. Plastic in the ocean will outweigh fish by 2050

If we don't take immediate action to reduce our appetite for plastic products, you'll soon be more likely to reel in a food wrapper than a rockfish.



6. They cost taxpayers millions every year to clean up

NRDC estimates that California spends as much as \$107 million each year dealing with plastic bag litter.⁶ We can think of a few million better ways to spend taxpayer dollars.



7. They make shopping more expensive

Think you've been getting all those plastic grocery bags on the house? Think again. The real cost of those "freebies" is built into the price of consumer goods.



8. They're an eyesore in our neighborhoods

Chances are you've seen a few of these "urban tumbleweeds" blighting your block. Banned bags mean cleaner communities.



9. The plastic bag industry profits off pollution

Plastic bags are big business in California, racking up a wholesale value of nearly \$200 million in 2012 alone. But who's raking it in? Not the Golden State: 98% of contributions to the pro-bag campaign were from companies outside of California.⁷



10. A statewide ban would streamline existing bag laws

Over 1/3 of Californians enjoy living in 150 communities where bags are already banned. A statewide solution would simplify this regulatory jumble for retailers and shoppers alike.⁸



Sources:

(1) <https://www.cbd.int/doc/publications/cbd-ts-67-en.pdf>

(2) <http://www.motherjones.com/blue-marble/2013/01/plastics-and-chemicals-they-absorb-pose-double-threat-marine-life>

(3) <http://edition.cnn.com/2008/WORLD/asiapcf/07/13/eco.plasticbagwaste/index.html>

(4) http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/explainer/2007/06/will_my_plastic_bag_still_be_here_in_2507.html

(5) <http://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/publiced/holidays/ReusableBags.htm>

(6) <https://www.nrdc.org/resources/waste-our-waterways-unveiling-hidden-costs-californians-litter-clean>

(7) http://www.mercurynews.com/science/ci_27589789/californias-plastic-bag-ban-suspended-by-ballot-referendum

(8) <http://www.sacbee.com/news/politics-government/capitol-alert/article2616122.html>

(9) https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-09/documents/2013_advncng_smm_rpt.pdf;

see also <http://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/publiced/holidays/ReusableBags.htm>

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