

# County of Santa Clara

Recycling and Waste Reduction Commission  
Integrated Waste Management Division

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May 4, 2009

Liz Kniss, President  
County of Santa Clara Board of Supervisors  
70 W. Hedding 10<sup>th</sup> Floor East Wing  
San Jose, CA 95110

Dear President Kniss:

Following a year of information gathering, stakeholder input, and discussion, the Recycling and Waste Reduction Commission (RWRC) of the County of Santa Clara is pleased to make the following recommendation to the Board of Supervisors regarding single-use carry out bags:

- Establish a ban on plastic bags and a fee on paper bags at all retailers (amount to be determined), excluding restaurants and fast food establishments;
- Exempt non-profit reuse stores (e.g. Goodwill Industries and The Salvation Army) from the ban and the fee for one year if they have a reusable bag credit program; and
- Adopt such an ordinance by November 2009 with an effective date of April 22, 2010, which is the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Earth Day.

The stakeholder input included plastic bag manufacturers, environmental advocacy groups, major retail associations, business advocacy groups, and interested members of the public. There was general concurrence on the fact that single-use bags are currently having a negative impact on our environment, but we faced the challenge of developing consensus on a meaningful regional solution. As most jurisdictions have engaged in recycling and waste management activities for several years, the feeling among Commissioners was that these programs alone are not sufficient to address the growing problem, and that **now is the time to act**.

This recommendation is being sent to each jurisdiction in the County. The RWRC recognizes that each jurisdiction has unique philosophy, demography and priorities. While jurisdictions may want to customize their plan to address their unique qualities, it is important to note that to the extent possible, countywide consistency offers the greatest potential to reduce the environmental impacts of single-use carryout bags.

Best Regards,

Jamie McLeod, Chair, County of Santa Clara  
Recycling and Waste Reduction Commission

**Commissioners:** Jamie McLeod, Chair; Ronit Bryant, Kansen Chu, Peter Drekmeier, Patrick Kwok, Evan Low, Cat Tucker, Kris Wang, Ken Yeager