



September 3, 2024

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
 Governor of the State of California
 1021 O Street, Suite 9000
 Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Senate Bill 1053 (Blakespear, Allen): Solid Waste: Recycled Paper Bags: Standards:
 Carryout Bag Prohibition – REQUEST FOR SIGNATURE**

Dear Governor Newsom:

The undersigned organizations request your signature on Senate Bill 1053, championed by Senator Blakespear, Senator Allen, and Assemblymember Bauer-Kahan. This bill would end the use of plastic bags in grocery stores and convenience stores at checkout and align with your administration's commitment to environmental stewardship – and does so at no cost to the state.

In 2014, California passed the nation's first ban on plastic bags. SB 270 (Padilla) required all plastic bags used in grocery, convenience, and retail stores that include groceries, to be reusable. After a decade under SB 270, it has become clear that plastic film grocery

bag distribution and waste have significantly grown. SB 270's standards for reusable bags have resulted in bags that are made of thicker plastic and that have failed to be collected, recycled, or reused.

Relatively few consumers re-use these plastic bags for shopping. Investigative reports found that even when the bags were returned to the store for recycling, many still found their way to landfills.¹ CalRecycle's statewide residential disposal reports suggest that over 5 billion bags in this category may have been landfilled in 2021, marking a significant reversal from several years of declining disposal. CalRecycle's 2018² and 2021³ Waste Characterization studies correlate with Alameda County's findings; the agency reported a 50-65% growth in the volume of "Plastic Grocery and Other Merchandise Bags" since 2018, exceeding 140,000 tons annually—a level not seen since 2003. According to Alameda County data sampled from a subset of stores, there was about an 800% increase in stores' compliant thick plastic bag purchases from 2015 to 2023. A legislative fix is necessary to curb this increasing plastic problem.

SB 1053 would only allow paper bags at checkout and prohibits distribution of plastic film bags at checkout. The bill clearly defines point of sale to cover all transactions where purchased goods may be transferred to a customer. Lastly, SB 1053 increases the recyclability standard of paper bags to be made from 50% postconsumer recycled materials by January 1, 2028.

From production to disposal, plastic waste is detrimental to the environment and human health. Plastics are primarily made from fossil fuels, and the extraction and refinement of fossil feedstocks for plastics release an array of toxic substances into the air and water, including known carcinogens and neurotoxins.⁴ Upon disposal, plastic

¹ Gutman, M., Simon, E., Park, C., Simpson, T., Kofsky, J., Schlosberg, J., Brooksbank, T., Yamashita, S., & Kim, S. R. (2023, May 23). *We put dozens of trackers in plastic bags for recycling. Many were trashed.* ABC News.

<https://abcnews.go.com/US/put-dozens-trackers-plastic-bags-recycling-trashed/story?id=99509422>

² California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery, 2018 Facility-Based Characterization of Solid Waste in California (2020). Sacramento, California.

³ California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery, 2021 Facility-Based Characterization of Solid Waste in California (2022). Sacramento, California.

⁴ The Plastics Production Problem. Center for Biological Diversity. (n.d.).
<https://www.biologicaldiversity.org/campaigns/plastic-production/index.html>

does not biodegrade, and toxic chemicals released from plastics damage soil quality and leeches into groundwater. Plastic bags are one of the most found pollutants in our seas⁵, and marine life ingests microplastics that are detrimental to their health.⁶ Therefore it is necessary to curb California's plastic production as much as possible to preserve our environment and health.

[PPIC's most recent poll "Californians and the Environment"](#) confirms California voters' ongoing concerns with plastic production and pollution – with 71 percent agreeing that plastics and marine debris are a big problem.

SB 1053 presents a compelling solution to a problem long overdue to address and does not create any additional costs to the state.

For these reasons, we urge you to sign SB 1053 to reduce plastic waste in California .

Please contact Jenn Engstrom (jengstrom@calpirg.org) and Jennifer Fearing (jennifer@fearlessadvocacy.com) with any questions.

Sincerely,



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⁵ Merran, J. (Ed.). (2018, June). Building A Clean Swell: 2018 Report. Ocean Conservancy.
<https://oceanconservancy.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/FINAL-2018-ICC-REPORT.pdf>

⁶ Understanding plastic pollution and its impact on lives. United Nations. (2023, June 5).
<https://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/may-2023/understanding-plastic-pollution-and-its-impact-lives#:~:text=Unlike%20other%20materials%2C%20plastic%20does.can%20cause%20serious%20health%20impacts> .

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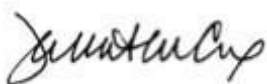
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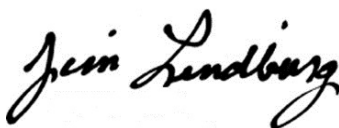
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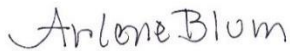


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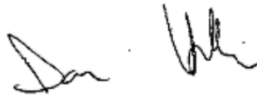


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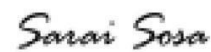


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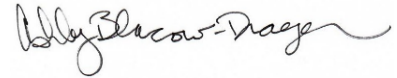
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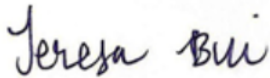
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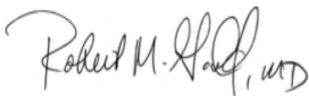
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