

For Immediate Release



Contact: Dave Heylen, V.P. Communications
Tel: 916.448.3545 • FAX 916.448.2793
Website: www.cagrocers.com
E-mail: dheylen@cagrocers.com

California Grocers Association
1415 L Street, Suite 450
Sacramento, CA 95814

CALIFORNIA GROCERS, LOS ANGELES MAYOR URGE STATE SENATE TO BYPASS THE RHETORIC AND PASS HISTORIC ENVIRONMENTAL LEGISLATION

SACRAMENTO, CA - (August 29, 2010) – The California Grocers Association on Sunday (August 29) called on California state senators to “cut through the rhetoric and misinformation” being pushed by opponents of legislation that would create a uniform, statewide standard for regulating single-use carryout bags.

The Senate will vote this week on Assembly Bill 1998 (D-Brownley) which will ban single-use plastic bags, require stores selling groceries to provide reusable bags for sale or free distribution, and allow the sale of recycled paper bags at cost. The bill has passed the Assembly and Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger has indicated he will sign it.

“The California Grocers Association strongly supports Assembly Bill 1998 and urges the California Senate to cut through the rhetoric and misinformation being pushed by opponents of the legislation and focus on the real issue – eliminating plastic bags and encouraging reusable bag use,” said Dave Heylen, CGA Vice President of Communications, at a press conference in Los Angeles on Sunday, that included Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, Bill author Assembly Member Julia Brownley and representatives from Heal the Bay, California Environment and Homeboy Industries.

Critics had claimed the bill would result in the loss of California jobs, create a financial windfall for grocery retailers and thwart recycling efforts.

“The goal is to move away from a system where all consumers subsidize the considerable costs of single-use bags to a system where consumers can make the economic choice of whether the convenience of single-use bags is worth the expense,” Heylen said.

The grocery industry originally supported the bill because it levels the playing field by including all retailers selling food items and not just large supermarkets and chain pharmacies. The industry also seeks one statewide, uniform standard and not a patchwork of ordinances regulated by local jurisdictions. “Eliminating plastic bags isn’t a question of ‘if’ but ‘when’,” Heylen said. “Already, several California localities have said they will pass plastic bag bans immediately if AB 1998 fails. More than 70 cities are considering doing the same.”

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The California Grocers Association is a non-profit trade association representing the food industry since 1898. CGA represents approximately 500 retail members operating over 6,000 food stores in California and Nevada, and approximately 200 grocery supplier companies. Retail membership includes chain and independent supermarkets, convenience stores and mass merchandisers.