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California Resource Recovery Association

November 10, 2010

Los Angeles County Supervisors
Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
Via email: Sachi Hamai, Executive Officer (shamai@bos.lacounty.gov)

RE: Support of Draft Single-use Bag Ordinance

Dear Los Angeles County Supervisors:

CRRRA (founded 1974) is California's statewide recycling association. It is the oldest and one of the largest non-profit recycling organizations in the United States. CRRRA is a 501(c)3 organization dedicated to achieving environmental sustainability in and beyond California through zero waste strategies including product stewardship, waste prevention, reuse, recycling and composting. CRRRA advocates for local, regional and state wide waste reduction efforts which result in critical environmental and climate protection outcomes. CRRRA's members represent all aspects of California's reduce-reuse-recycle-compost economy. Our members work for over 100 cities, counties and municipal districts, as well as hauling companies, material processors, non-profit organizations, state agencies, and allied professionals.

CRRRA supports the Draft Single-use Bag Ordinance (Draft Ordinance) released on October 28, 2010. The Draft Ordinance is a comprehensive approach to single-use bag pollution and will deter consumption of all single-use bags distributed at the point of sale at supermarkets, large retail pharmacies and food marts. The Draft closely resembles AB 1998 (Brownley) which the County supported in the past legislative session.

Plastic bags are a ubiquitous consumer item designed to be used by consumers for minutes but which persist in our marine environment for hundreds of years. A significant majority of all marine debris comes from primarily urban, land-based sources. This plastic pollution is a growing and persistent threat to marine life, and also to the industries supported by healthy marine environment.

The cleanup of litter from single-use bags is an unnecessary and avoidable economic strain on local jurisdictions, including but not limited to the collection and disposal of litter on streets, creeks and beaches, and the installation and maintenance of trash control devices to comply with total maximum daily load limits (TMDLs) for trash under the Clean Water Act.

Single-use plastic bags routinely clog catch basin inserts and screens thereby increasing local flood risks and maintenance costs. The County of Los Angeles spends approximately \$4 million each year to cleanup 31 miles of beach. Littered streets and beaches also threaten California's ocean economy, valued at \$43 billion. An estimated 408,000 jobs mostly in the tourism and recreation sectors are tied to the ocean economy.

Single use plastic bags are also a significant problem for municipal recycling programs. Well-intentioned residents place plastic bags into their recycling carts, where they enter a system in which they foul machinery, increase downtime, and represent a disproportionately high cost to process into a product that is so contaminated that it is at best marginally marketable, and typically a contaminant that must be landfilled.

As the state's most populous county, Los Angeles is positioned to have a profound impact on the litter, pollution and costs associated with single use plastic bags. CRRRA urges you to support this ordinance. Thank you for your leadership on this critical issue.

Sincerely,

J. Muir

Julie Muir
President

Stephen Bantillo

Stephen Bantillo
Executive Director