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California Resource Recovery Association

March 28, 2011

Honorable Joe Simitian, Chair
Senate Environmental Quality Committee
State Capitol
Sacramento, California 95814
FAX: (916) 322-3519

RE: SB 567 (DeSaulnier) Recycling: Plastic Products - Support

Dear Senator Simitian and Committee Members:

The California Resource Recovery Association, founded in 1974, is California's statewide recycling association. It is the oldest and one of the largest non-profit recycling organizations in the United States. CRRA is dedicated to achieving environmental sustainability in and beyond California through Zero Waste strategies including product stewardship, waste prevention, reuse, recycling and composting. CRRA advances local, regional and state wide waste reduction efforts which result in critical environmental and climate protection outcomes. CRRA's more than 500 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.

SB 567 would prohibit manufacturers from making false and misleading claims about the biodegradability or compostability of their products. Unsubstantiated claims such as "biodegradable" and "degradable" may mislead to consumers to believe that products so labeled are less harmful to the environment if improperly disposed. These claims can also wreak havoc on established recycling markets.

A plastic product's ability to biodegrade is a function of its physical and chemical composition, as well as the environmental to which it is subject. Studies show that even plastic designed to compost does not biodegrade in the "natural" environment, and can be equally harmful to wildlife as conventional plastics. Accordingly, the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) does not have standard specifications for the terms "biodegradable" or "degradable".

SB 567 is needed to prohibit false and misleading product labeling. Consumers deserve reliable and standard labeling for the end-of-life attribute of products, and manufacturers that are already making truthful claims about the end-of-life attributes of their products deserve a fair marketplace.

Please vote YES on SB 567.

Sincerely,

Julie Muir

Julie Muir
President

Cc: Senator Mark DeSaulnier