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915 L Street, Suite C-216  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
916-441-2772  
info@crra.com  
www.crra.com

# 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 568 (Lowenthal) Recycling: Polystyrene Food Containers - 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 568 would prohibit the distribution and use of expanded polystyrene (EPS, also known as Styrofoam™) carry-out food containers by food vendors for prepared food. While these containers are designed for single use by consumers, their impacts on the environment are long term, harmful and expensive. EPS containers are light weight and highly subject to air born litter. They migrate easily to waterways and ultimately to the ocean where it breaks into small pieces that persist in the environment. Marine life from the bottom to the top of the food chain mistake foam pieces for food, negatively impacting fisheries and the ecosystems upon which they rely.

EPS is the second most abundant form of debris on California beaches. To date, 48 California jurisdictions have banned EPS take-out food containers. It's no wonder, since California jurisdictions spend millions of taxpayer dollars each year cleaning litter from streets, storm drains, waterways and beaches. The County of Los Angeles, for example, spends \$18 million annually to clean litter from streets and storm drain catch basins and over \$4 million each year cleaning beaches. Cal Trans spends about \$65 million a year removing litter from roadsides and highways.

Recycling of used EPS food containers is not viable due to a host of barriers, including but not limited to contamination with food and incompatibility with the mixed collection recycling systems that are common throughout California. We know of no California jurisdiction that currently accepts EPS food containers in its curbside collection program.

Please vote YES on SB 568 and help California reduce the use of this badly designed product.

Sincerely,

*Julie Muir*

Julie Muir  
President

Cc: Senator Alan Lowenthal