OPPONENTS DECRY PASSAGE OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY "BAG BAN" ORDINANCE
Measure Threatens Jobs, Increases Grocery Costs & May Illegally Conflict with Prop. 26

LOS ANGELES, CA (November 16, 2010) – Opponents of a Los Angeles County "Bag Ban" today denounced the Board of Supervisors’ passage of the new ordinance and warn that it will unnecessarily raise grocery costs for county residents, hurt workers and small businesses and fail to earmark one penny for environmental improvement programs.

The controversial ordinance, which prohibits grocery and other retail outlets from providing customers with fully recyclable plastic bags and requires those same stores to charge customers $0.10 for each paper bag, passed after hours of public comment. Under the ordinance, grocers and other retailers get to keep all the proceeds.

“It’s extremely disappointing that the Board of Supervisors would take this approach, which threatens to derail existing recycling programs and fleeces consumers," said Tim Shestek, senior director of State Affairs for the American Chemistry Council. "We believe there are more effective ways of reducing bag litter and waste that do not result in raising grocery costs for families, put at risk hundreds manufacturing jobs in the Los Angeles area, or require more government bureaucracy.”

It remains unclear if the legislation was passed in compliance with Proposition 26, the mandate that California voters strongly supported earlier this month. This new statewide mandate reflects voters’ concerns that fees are essentially taxes and necessitates that they be treated as such – requiring higher standards for approval.

"California voters overwhelming agreed that they're tired of getting hit with fees that are little more than thinly veiled taxes. In the days ahead, we'll have to look at all the options to see how Proposition 26 applies to the bag ordinance,” Shestek said.

ACC actively supports alternative approaches for reducing bag litter and waste, such as programs aimed at increasing the recycling of plastic bags and wraps. A growing number of states and cities around the United States – including California, New York, Delaware, Rhode Island, Chicago,

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New York City and Tucson – have passed legislation to promote at-store recycling programs as a practical and effective means to reduce waste from plastic bags and wraps. Plastic bag makers support these approaches and are working cooperatively with grocers and retailers in many communities to establish and expand recycling programs.

In fact a recent report prepared by Moore Recycling found that curbside recycling of plastic bags and wraps grew 39 percent in Los Angeles County from 2007 to 2009. The recycling of plastic bags alone grew 62 percent during this period suggesting that Los Angeles residents have become accustomed to putting their plastic bags into their curbside recycling bins.

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