Statement

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OPPONENTS OF BAG BANS RESPOND TO RALLY
Bag bans kill jobs, hurt economy; California should focus on recycling

SACRAMENTO, CA (November 29, 2010) – Opponents of bag bans today denounced a Sacramento rally urging California jurisdictions to ban plastic bags. Bag bans hurt workers and small businesses and threaten to dismantle California’s growing infrastructure to recycle plastic bags and other product wraps. In California alone, more than 1,200 people hold well-paying bag manufacturing jobs.

“The legislature already looked at this issue and decided that bag bans are not in California’s best interest,” said Tim Shestek, senior director of State Affairs for the American Chemistry Council. “Bag bans not only jeopardize good manufacturing jobs in California, they raise grocery costs for struggling families who rely on free bags. That’s why a coalition of nearly 500 businesses, including small grocers, retailers and chambers of commerce, strongly opposed California’s proposed bag ban bill earlier this year.”

Plastic grocery bags are a resource-efficient choice: They require 70% less energy to manufacture than paper bags, produce half the amount of greenhouse gas emissions, and can be recycled all across California.

The recycling of plastic bags and wraps reached a record high across the United States in 2008, with more than 832 million pounds of this valuable material recycled to make durable backyard decks, shopping carts and new bags. That’s a 28 percent increase in the recycling of plastic bags and wraps since 2005.

In Los Angeles, 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.

"We believe numbers like these prove that when education meets opportunity, people do recycle. We don’t have to raise grocery costs for California’s families, put manufacturing jobs at risk, or create more government bureaucracy to reduce litter,” Shestek said.
Plastic bag makers actively support 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, 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 across the country to establish and expand recycling programs.

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