

Single-Use Carry-Out Shopping Bag Proposed Ordinance Overview

1. What is the proposed ordinance?

San José and various other cities in Santa Clara County have participated in an effort led by the Santa Clara County Recycling and Waste Reduction Commission to encourage shopping with reusable bags and reduce the use of disposable bags. Key components include:

- Applies to all retail establishments, except restaurants
- 25 cents per bag to consumers who choose disposable shopping bags
- Fee is capped at \$2.00 per transaction
- WIC and food stamp recipients are exempt

2. Why is this ordinance being proposed?

Disposable plastic and paper shopping bags are not free. Hidden costs include:

- resource consumption
 - Paper bags are made from 14 million trees per year
 - Plastic bags are made from fossil fuels – the equivalent to 12 million barrels of oil (natural gas in the US) per year. That fuel is equivalent to what it would take to fuel 500,000 cars with gas for an entire year.
- litter clean-up
 - \$3 million dollars are spent annually in San José for litter clean-up costs
- recycling/disposal costs
 - Recycling facility operators report that bales of recycled plastic bags have little to no value. They are paying \$180 per ton to have the bales taken away; costing the City's garbage and recycling contractors over \$1 million per year.
 - Only 1-4% of the 14 billion plastic grocery and merchandise bags used annually in the State of California are recycled.

3. How will the fee be used?

The Bag Pollution Clean-up fee is similar to the current California Redemption Value (CRV) on beverage containers. CRV funds are used for enforcement, auditing, grant funding, technical assistance and education. The Bag Pollution Clean-Up Fee would fund:

- Public outreach related to litter prevention
- Litter clean up costs
- Program enforcement

Retailers would keep 5 cents for every plastic and paper bag, and 10 cents for bags made with 40% recycled material.

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4. What are the next steps?

San José will continue to host stakeholder meetings with businesses and residents. Click here for the [tentative timeline](#).