# Why Vote Yes on Prop 67 and No on Prop 65 to Ban Single-Use Plastic Bags in California?

Voters have a key opportunity this November to uphold California's single-use plastic bag ban, but need to **watch out for dirty ballot tricks by the bag industry.**

## VOTE YES on Prop 67 to implement the statewide bag ban passed by the legislature in 2014.

- California enacted a state-wide plastic bag ban (SB 270–Padilla) into law in 2014.

- The law was blocked when out of state bag manufacturers placed Prop 67 on the ballot. It requires voters to approve the implementation of SB 270, the legislatively enacted ban.

- These out of state bag manufacturers have now placed two measures on the November ballot (Prop 67 and Prop 65) in order to confuse voters and prevent a state-wide plastic bag ban.

## VOTE NO on Prop 65 because it could invalidate the statewide bag ban.

- Prop 65 sounds good because it would divert funds raised from the sale of paper bags to an environmental fund.

- Legal analysis indicates that there is a good chance that if Prop 65 passes, the fees charged on bags, as a result of the passage of Prop 67, could be viewed as a tax, and would require a 2/3 majority of voters to support it in order to be valid, which means Prop 65 could invalidate the state bag ban, since 2/3 of voters supporting is a very high bar.

- We know: It's super-confusing! But that's the point. We're pretty sure the bag industry put this on the ballot because they want to confuse voters.

## California's bag ban protects the environment — not the profits of out-of-state bag manufacturers.

- In California, the multi-million dollar "no" campaign against the bag ban is 98% funded by out-of-state



*A mother sea otter tries to rescue her pup from a plastic bag in California.*

PHOTO BY TERRY MCCORMAC, 2011.

firms, and the largest funders are plastic bag manufacturers from South Carolina, New Jersey, and Texas.[1]

## Plastic bags waste taxpayer dollars.

- Government spends roughly $428 million annually to control litter before it reaches state waters. Between 8 and 25 percent of that cost is attributable to plastic bag waste.[2]

- Managing the 24 billion bags that end up in landfills costs $25 million dollars each year.[3]

## Plastic bag recycling is costly and ineffective.

- Recycling plastic bags does not make economic sense. One report found recycling one ton of plastic bags costs $4,000. The recycled product can be sold for $32.[4]

- Shopping bags jam expensive machinery at recycling plants and contaminate the recycling stream, increasing costs. In the City of San Jose, plastic bag jams cost the city approximately $1 million per year.[5]

## Bag bans work.

- Large stores covered by Los Angeles County's ban on plastic bags reduced overall single-use bag usage by 95%, which includes a 30% reduction in paper bag usage.[6]
- San Jose reduced plastic bag litter by 89% in the storm drain system, 60% in the creeks and rivers, and 59% in city streets and neighborhoods.[7]
- 151 jurisdictions in California have now banned single-use plastic bags and placed a fee on paper bags.[8]

## Plastic bags harm marine and human life.

- At least 690 species are impacted by marine debris (mostly plastic); 10% of them had ingested micro-plastics.[9]
- Ingestion of plastic debris by seabirds, fish, and sea turtles has been widely documented. Ingestion can cause suffocation or starvation; wildlife can also get entangled in plastic debris.

## California's waterways are filling with plastic.

- In the Los Angeles area alone, 10 metric tons of plastic fragments — like grocery bags, straws and soda bottles — are carried into the Pacific Ocean every day.[10]
- Nearly 4 million pieces of plastic flood the San Francisco Bay every day.[11]
- About 61% of street litter in the Bay Area is not captured or controlled by street sweeping and litter collection and ends up flowing into inland and coastal waters.[12]

## Single-use plastic bags are a major part of the problem.

- Because they are lightweight, plastic bags can often become litter. Even when properly disposed of, they fly out of open garbage containers and landfills.[13]
- According to the California Coastal Commission, plastic bags comprise 13.5% of shoreline litter. The City of Los Angeles found that plastic bags made up 25% of litter in storm drains.[14]
- The average time of use of a disposable bag is 12 minutes.[15]

1   http://cal-access.sos.ca.gov/Campaign/Committees/Detail.aspx?id=1372902&view=late1&session=2015
2   NRDC, "Waste in Our Water: The Annual Cost to California Communities of Reducing Litter that Pollutes Our Waterways," August 2013. http://docs.nrdc.org/oceans/ oce_13082701.asp
3   "Shopping? Take Reusable Bags!" CalRecycle. N.p., 23 Nov. 2011. Web. 13 June 2012. http://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/publiced/holidays/ReusableBags.htm
4   Clean Air Council. (2009 May). *Why Plastic Bag Fees Work*.
5   City of San Jose staff report, San Jose Transportation and Environment Committee Hearing, February 2, 2009.
6   "Single Use Bag Ordinance, Los Angeles County, CA," Green Cities California, January 27, 2013, http://greencitiescalifornia.org/best-practices/waste-reduction/LA-co_single-use-bag.html
7   https://www.sanjoseca.gov/Archive/ViewFile/Item/2027
8   http://www.cawrecycles.org/list-of-local-bag-bans/
9   S.C. Gail and R.C. Thompson, Marine Pollution Bulletin, Volume 92, Issues 1–2, 15 March 2015, Pages 170–179
10  http://www.biologicaldiversity.org/campaigns/ocean_plastics/
11  http://www.sfei.org/documents/microplastic-contamination-san-francisco-bay
12  http://www.latimes.com/science/sciencenow/la-sci-sn-tons-of-plastic-trash-in-oceans-20150213-story.html
13  Brendle Group. "Triple Bottom Line Evaluation: Plastic Bag Policy Options." City of Fort Collins, October 2012, pg. 9.
14  http://www3.epa.gov/region9/marine-debris/faq.html
15  "Fighting the Tide of Plastic Bags in a World Awash with Waste" http://edition.cnn.com/2008/WORLD/asiapcf/07/13/eco.plasticbagwaste/index.html