

Ventura Single-Use Carryout Bag Ordinance Decision Delayed

CITY COUNCIL TIE VOTE SPARES RESIDENTS FROM AN ONEROUS NANNY STATE BAG BAN

By Anthony van Leeuwen

May 23, 2014

Last December, the Ventura City Council voted 6 to 1 to go ahead and prepare a Single-Use Carryout Bag Ordinance and an addendum to the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) developed by the Beach Erosion Authority for Clean Oceans and Nourishment (BEACON) EIR for consideration by the City Council in six months.

On 19 May 2014, this Single-Use Carryout Bag Ordinance and the EIR addendum was on the city council agenda and failed to pass because of the tie vote by the Ventura City Council. (Watkins & Raives, 2014)

Mayor Cheryl Heitmann opened discussion of the Single-Use Carryout Bag Ordinance agenda item and turned it over to **Ray Olson**, Public Works Environmental Sustainability Division Manager for the City of Ventura. Mr. Olson presented a slide show outlining the proposed ordinance developed by city staff. Key features of the ordinance presented in the presentation are as follows:

- The ordinance applies to supermarkets, grocery stores and pharmacies and retail stores with a limited line of food related items such as snack foods or groceries and liquor stores.
- Outdoor venues such as swap meets, farmers markets, street fairs, restaurants, fast food establishments are exempt from the ordinance.
- Retail stores would be required to report the total number of paper bags provided and the total amount collected and also provide a summary of the reusable bag promotional efforts.
- Customer receipts must show the number of paper bags provided and the amount charged.
[AUTHOR'S NOTE: *Since customer receipts must show the number of paper bags provided and the amount charged, the retail transaction cannot be completed until all purchases are bagged thereby potentially slowing down the checkout line.*]
- If the ordinance is adopted, the effective date is January 1, 2015 for large retail stores with at least 10,000 square feet of floor space and July 1, 2015 for smaller retail stores.

Mr. Olson, went on to explain that the ordinance would be implemented by the Public Works Department Sustainability Division which will perform Outreach, education, and participate in store events (reusable bag giveaways). The cost for this effort would be \$12,000 per year for the first two years and \$1000 per year after. Non-General Funds from the Waste Diversion and Recycling Budget also known as AB 939 Non-General Funds would be used. He went on to say that Public Works staff had visited more than 60 small business as part of the Outreach effort.

Mr. Joe Yahner, from the City of Ventura Environmental Sustainability Office, discussed the BEACON Final EIR and the city prepared addendum, and stated there were no significant impacts. He went on to discuss California Senate Bill 270 (SB 270) a statewide Single Use Carryout Bag Bill on which a vote is expected later this summer. SB 270 is similar to Ventura's ordinance and has an effective date of July 1, 2015 for large stores and 1 July 2016 for all other stores. SB 270 includes a grandfather clause that would allow local ordinances to remain in effect if they were adopted by Sept 1, 2014.

The presentation concluded with Alternatives and Recommended Actions. Two alternatives provided by the city staff are: (1) Postpone consideration of proposed Ventura Ordinance until the outcome of the statewide Single-Use Carryout Bag Bill (SB 270) is known; and (2) Modify the proposed ordinance, knowing that significant modifications may require a new EIR.

The Recommended Actions included the following: (a) Introduce and waive the first reading of the ordinance amending the Municipal Code to add Chapter 6.800 "Single-Use Carryout Bags at certain retail food and grocery store establishments"; (b) Adopt a resolution certifying the BEACON EIR for a Single-Use Carryout Bag Ordinance; (c) Adopt a resolution approving the addendum to the BEACON EIR prepared by city staff and dated May 1, 2014; and (d) Set the proposed ordinance for a second reading and adoption at the city Council meeting of June 2, 2014.

What Was Not Presented Or Discussed By City Staff Or The City Council

That the proposed ordinance would establish a **new benefit for certain low income groups at the expense of other shoppers, particularly those who chose to pay for paper bags**. See the following excerpts:

Proposed Ordinance, Paragraph D: All charges collected by a store under this Chapter may be **retained by the store and used for one or more of the following purposes:** 1. the costs associated with complying with the requirements of this Chapter; 2. the **actual costs of providing recyclable paper carryout bags**; 3. **the costs of providing low or no cost reusable bags to customers of the store who are exempted by section 6.800.060**; or 4. The costs associated with a store's educational materials or education campaign encouraging the use of reusable bags, if any.

Proposed Ordinance, Section 6.800.060: All stores must provide at the point of sale, **free of charge**, either reusable bags or recyclable paper carryout bags or both, at the store's option, to any customer participating either in the California Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children ... or in the Supplemental Food Program ... of the state Welfare and Institutions Code.

Cost To Residents Omitted From Discussion By City Staff And City Council

The **cost to city residents** in complying with the ordinance. The author's article titled "What Will A Plastic Bag Ban Cost Residents In Your Community" shows that the bag ban will cost Ventura residents about \$2.5 million dollars more per year after the ban than before. (van Leeuwen, What Will A Plastic Carrount Bag Ban Cost Your Community, 2013)

Because it was getting late in the evening, **Mayor Cheryl Heitmann** allowed students from the Academy of Technology & Leadership at Saticoy (ATLAS) elementary school to address the City Council. The teacher and her five fourth grade students spoke in support of the Single-Use Carryout Bag Ordinance. The teacher explained that an environmental scientist from Surfrider Foundation spoke to the class and students decided that they had to do something.

Mayor Heitmann then turned the floor to Council questions.

Councilmember Morehouse asked if SB 270 should pass, how would that affect our ordinance. The staff responded that because of a grandfather clause our ordinance would not be affected.

Deputy Mayor Nasarenko wanted to get sense of feedback from small businesses, the mom and pop stores, that city staff encountered. City staff replied that most were aware and asked questions about when and what type of bags are affected and that in general the businesses were mostly supportive.

Councilmember Mike Tracy ask if the SB 270 was the same as our ordinance? City staff replied that they were essentially the same except for the implementation dates and non-compliance fees or penalties. Also that the state does not have any reporting requirements for retailers.

Mayor Cheryl Heitmann then asked about the sample bags particularly the thicker plastic bag that are reusable bags. She asked if these were free or whether consumers would pay for them. City staff responded by saying that the City of Ventura's ordinance would requires stores to provide reusable bags which they can sell or give away. Stores could charge any amount for the thicker plastic bags, although most stores will charge the same amount as for paper bags. The fee on paper bags is 10-cents.

Mayor Heitmann then passed the comment forms submitted by members of the public to fellow councilmembers and then opened the floor for comments by Public Speakers.

AUTHOR'S NOTE: Not all public speakers and comments are included below.

The first speaker was **Isabel**, a teenager who participates in California YMCA Youth and Government program, who stated "so all of you here are elected by the public and the public elected you because they knew that you would be capable of changing Ventura for the better. And so with this ordinance brought before you it is your responsibility to approve it and change Ventura for the better." She also said that "Teens actually care about environmental issues".

Jason Weiner on behalf of Wishtoyo Foundation and its water initiative presented several slides showing data collected in 2009 - 2010 for the San Jon Barranca and the Santa Clara River and estuary. The data indicated an ongoing problem with trash including pieces of plastic and plastic bags. He stated that Wishtoyo is in favor of adopting the bag ordinance.

Jason also stated that trash is impairing use of and enjoyment of beautiful natural resources such as the San Jon Barranca and the Santa Clara River and estuaries. He also mentioned that through their water initiative, Wishtoyo has submitted data to the State Water Board for the San Jon Barranca and the Santa Clara River. He stated that what will happen is that the State Water Board will under the clean water act

list these waterways as impaired and develop a Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL) Trash initiative that will have an economic impact on the City of Ventura. The city will then have to comply with the TMDL and take action to clean up trash in these waterways. He also stated that a plastic bag ban would go a long way towards cleaning up these waterways and perhaps prevent action by the State Water Board.

Jason Weiner is the Ventura Coastkeeper's (VCK's) Associate Director and Staff Attorney, responsible for protecting, conserving, and restoring the ecological integrity of Ventura County's water bodies.

Laura Peralta representing the California Grocers Association, spoke in favor of the Single-Use Carryout Bag Ordinance. She stated that they support the charge on single use paper bags to ensure regional consistency and also to encourage reusable bag use. She stated in areas where the paper bag fee was not charged, people merely switched from using plastic bags to using paper bags and that this was a problem for the industry. She stated that plastic bags cost 1-cent and paper bags cost between 6 and 12 cents. She stated the association supports this ordinance and the regional consistency it offers so that customers who will switch shopping to stores in areas where there is no bag ban. She said that regional consistency levels the playing field and that it's about fairness.

Laura Peralta is director, Southern California Local Government Relations for the California Grocers Association, a non-profit association representing over 500 retail members and 300 grocery suppliers.

Victor Thasiah, a professor at California Lutheran University (CLU) said that he used to live in Thousand Oaks and has now made the beautiful City of Ventura his home. Last semester he organized a trip for students to the Channel Islands and worked with Channel Islands Restoration and the national park service, UC Santa Barbara and Channel Islands Packers. He urged adoption of the ordinance because of the low recycle rate of plastic bags, they harm marine life, and it is costly for our community to clean up and that he would like to see the Single-Use bags banned.

AUTHOR'S NOTE: *The reason so few plastic bags are recycled is that plastic grocery bags are one of the most reused items that comes into the home. Once they are reused as trash bags or to dispose of dirty diapers, pet litter, etc., the bags end up in the landfill and can no longer be recycled. Environmentalists appear to have a hard time grasping this simple fact. Please see the author's article titled "[Plastic Bag Recycling Rate - A Non-Issue](http://fighttheplasticbagban.com)". (van Leeuwen, Plastic Bag Recycling Rate - A Non-Issue, 2013)*

Councilmember Monahan mentioned that CLU students have been involved in the past in working with the city to help clean up the Ventura River Bed. He wanted to pass on the city's appreciation.

Jim Hines, Conservation Coordinator for Los Padres Chapter of the Sierra Club, stated that "Plastic Bags serve no useful purpose in our society." Jim also stated that he had an opportunity last fall to visit a marine mammal sea rescue center where a sea lion pup was brought in who had ingested a plastic bag and was gasping for air. After some emergency surgery the sea lion pup survived. He stated that plastic

bags are dangerous and destructive and we do not know how many small and large sea mammals and sea birds ingest plastic bags and many times do not survive. He also stated he takes great pride in the beauty of our city and walks often along the beach, Ventura River Parkway, Arroyo Verde Park and the Ventura Community Park. He stated that he is always disgusted with plastic bags over all those sites mentioned. He notes that it takes extra staff time to clean up bags and some are blown high up in trees and takes away the beauty of the city. Please adopt the ordinance tonight, the planet cannot wait for you.

AUTHOR'S NOTE: *The author of this article walks the path at Ventura Community Park each weekday and has done so for about three years. **At most only one or two plastic bags are sighted in a week.** A much bigger problem is graffiti and the overflowing trash cans on Monday morning after a busy weekend!*

Another speaker, **Michelle Stevens**, owner of The Refill Shop in downtown Ventura, mentioned that she loves living here in Ventura and charges 50-cents for a paper bag in her shop. She feels proud of the city because it is ready to take conservation to the next level. She stated that plastic bags use a significant amount of precious resources to create them, they are an eyesore to the city, they harm wildlife, and are nowhere recyclable. She stated that it will mean a change for residents but that's OK because humans are naturally adaptable. She said that while the first few trips to the grocery store will incur an extra fee, a shift to using reusable bags will soon appear.

AUTHOR'S NOTE: *Plastic bags are recyclable at the grocery stores' In-Store Recycling bin.*

AUTHOR'S NOTE: *Plastic carryout bags are made from the waste byproducts of natural gas and oil refining processes. These waste by products if not used for making plastic would normally be burned off creating a worse environmental problem. For more information see the article titled "[The Lies, Myths, Half-Truths, and Exaggerations of Bag Ban Proponents](#)". (van Leeuwen & Williams, 2013)*

The next public speaker was **Bob Davidson** who stated the need to implement the ordinance right away. He said it would qualify as an enhanced best management practice and would greatly reduce our dependence on plastic bags that are designed to be disposable but are not accepted by Gold Coast in their recycling system. At the December hearing there was a discussion of the 10-cent fee for paper bags and on that I offer the following comments: (1) Without the fee there is no incentive for customers to bring their own reusable bags; (2) the fee is waived for low income families; (3) the stores are allowed to keep the fee because if it reverted to the city, it would be a tax in violation of Proposition 26; and (4) the fees would allow the store to provide educational materials and signs to encourage the use of reusable bags. In addition, he mentioned the two alternatives and stated that it is unnecessary to wait to see if a statewide bag ban is implement, because it would be grandfathered in and there is no assurance that the statewide bag ban would be implemented due to the heavy lobbying by the plastic bag industry. He said that the Sacramento Bee has reported that the plastic bag industry has spent \$646,000 since 2012 to prevent California from becoming the first state to ban plastic bags. If you want

to foster a clean Ventura, then it is up to you to pass the ordinance now. Don't wait for Sacramento to pass a ban and it is time for Ventura to join the more than 106 jurisdictions that have adopted the ban. Bob Davidson went on to report that LA County reported one year after the ban a 95% reduction in plastic bags and a 30% reduction in paper bag use.

AUTHOR'S NOTE: *The County of Los Angeles could not provide supporting data to Save The Plastic Bag Coalition under a public records request that demonstrates that the quantity of paper bag used in Los Angeles County was reduced by 30% as claimed. The County admitted that paper bag quantities were estimated. Hence, the claim of a 30% paper bag use reduction is unsubstantiated.*

The next speaker was **Kathy Thompson** who stated that she felt the need to be here tonight because she was the one who instigated this by emailing photos of plastic bag litter on Day Road to a councilmember in 2012. The litter was an aftermath of the swap meet. She stated that since the swap meet will be exempt under the proposed ordinance that the problem will not be solved. She did say that the swap meet has a crew that goes out and cleans up the trash after the event. She started the campaign to get the swap meet to clean up after itself, but it has turned into an all-out campaign to ban multiuse and multipurpose plastic bags under the guise of Clean And Safe Ventura. She stated that in her opinion we are going after low hanging fruit by trying to control citizens behavior and in the years since she had taken those photos, people have become more responsible. Just the talk about banning plastic bags has seemed to bring about some control of plastic bag problem in the city. She stated plastic bags are multiuse and that Venturans are responsible. She feels that this issue is a waste of the councils time since there are huge safety issues associate with human trafficking under the guise of massage parlors and the destruction of innocent lives that go along with that activity. Also regular cleaning of the beachfront walkway so that it is more inviting to citizens and visitors is important. She states that she sees few plastic bags while stepping over more offensive material and would prefer the promenade be cleaned before the summer season when visitors arrive. In conclusion Venturans are responsible and do not need to be policed to keep the city clean. There needs to be more litter cleanup opportunities.

The next speaker **Richard Cole** said that he visited the East side of Day Road about a dozen times regarding this issue and also met with the flea market manager. In the 1990's Richard worked as a Production Analyst at Gold Coast Recycling for many years. As far as single use bags, 70% are reused as trash bags and for cleaning up dog doo. He states he reuses 100% of the plastic bags he gets and does not throw any away. The paper bags he gets from Trader Joes, 90% go into the recycling bin. He says he recycles almost everything and also bicycles 100 miles per week and 5000 miles per year. The city council used the plastic bag litter on Day Road as justification for the ban, litter that originated from the flea market. That problem no longer exists because the flea market cleans up after itself including the East Side of Day Road. The cities premise is gone.

Richard went on and said it is worse than that. Councilmembers Carl Morehouse and Brian Brennan knew the source of the trash in their photos and knew that Ventura college is state property and the flea

market would be exempt from the cities bag ban. He also stated "From where I sit, the use of the photo was intentionally deceptive if not a little fraudulent from the outset.

AUTHOR'S NOTE: Councilmember Carl Morehouse later took credit for contacting the College and getting the flea market to clean up after itself, giving some credence to the allegation of deception. In addition, at the same city council meeting then Councilmember Brian Brennan showed a viewgraph presentation of litter in the Ventura River and Estuary purportedly coming from storm drains. He neglected to mention, the data was captured prior to the installation of trash capture devices in storm drain inlets and catch basins. These devices will keep a lot of trash including plastic debris and plastic bags out of the river bottom and estuary. For more information see blog post titled "[Ventura City Council Approves preparation of Single-Use Carryout Bag Ordinance](#)".

Richard Cole went on to say, that Gold Coast Recycling pays the city a percentage of every ton of recycled material that it sells. If the bag ban is enacted, the money the city receives from the sale reclaimed brown bags will be multiplied many times over, the **city will profit on the misery of others** because of the increase in brown bags going to Gold Coast Recycling. I find that disingenuous!

The next speaker was **Brian Brennan**, former City Councilmember, who thanked the Council and city staff for bringing this item back and for the great staff report and the work to reach out to affected businesses. I think we have heard from a couple of citizens that are more than responsible and very active in this community and we wish there were 107,000 of them to help alleviate the problem we do have. It is unfortunate in government that sometimes we end up making regulations that affect folks who are doing the right thing. But I remind you that with this ordinance you have the opportunity to get at 97% of the plastic bags distributed in this city that is through the large grocery stores. The opportunity to do that is paramount when we talk about a clean and safe city. For a city that is headquarters for the Channel Islands National Park and at the doorstep of a marine sanctuary. It is something we can do in policy and in tandem with what they are trying to do, to bring back the fisheries.

Mr. Brian Brennan is a former City of Ventura Councilmember and also serves as an Executive Director for the Beach Erosion Authority For Clean Oceans and Nourishment (BEACON). Mr. Brennan oversaw the development of the BEACON Environmental Impact Report for the Single-Use Carryout Bag Ordinance.

The next speaker was **Patty Jenkins**, who is a recycler, stated that since the state has a ban in the works to not please pass this ban. To most people grocery bags are not single use bags but multiple use bags. I guarantee you will see a lot of other trash before you see plastic bag. This ban is a tax on the public which hurts those on fixed income. Also the stores are set to make money on the ban as evidenced by other presenters. California Grocers Association says that they will profit off this. Most of us clip coupons in order to save a little money and the bag ban would add that right back onto the bill. Also most of us do not think reusable bags are sanitary from the bottom of milk cartons and blood from packages of meat. If we don't have those bags as trash liners then the public will have to purchase

plastic bags and those bags will be single use plastic bags that end up in the landfill. She also added that if you require stores to charge 10-cents for a paper bag that stores ought to be required to give 10-cent credit when using a reusable bag we bring, or at the very least can we make it 1-cent for each paper bag.

AUTHOR'S NOTE: *A trash bag once used for trash will **never be reused for anything else** and is the **true** single-use plastic bag. A plastic carryout bag is a multiple use bag, once used to carry purchases home is then reused as a trash bag or reused in some other manner. Unused plastic carryout bags should be recycled in the retail store In-Store Recycling Bin and not disposed in the trash bin or curbside recycle bin.*

AUTHOR'S NOTE: *Packages of meat and poultry should be wrapped in plastic bags available at the meat counters. According to one store manager in the bay area, most people do not do this.*

The next speaker, **Mr. Lawrence Madsen**, spoke on behalf of his canine constituent. He mentioned that after plastic carryout bags are banned, people can use the produce bags to clean up after their pets.

Dan Glaser representing the Surfrider Foundation, reported that outreach events with surfers and hikers has been overwhelmingly positive for a Single-Use Carryout Bag Ordinance. He stated that this has been a long time coming and that he is in full support and urged the council to move forward.

Dan Glaser is Chair of the Ventura Chapter of the Surfrider Foundation.

Deborah Pendrey stated that she is representing the Ojai Valley Green Coalition and urged the Ventura City Council to move this issue forward. She stated that Ojai had adopted a similar ordinance effective July 1, 2012. She noted that it took adjustment but that change is hard and is the right thing to do. She said she sees more and more reusable bags in the hands of shoppers each time they do a survey. And the 10-cent fee on paper bags is there to incentivize folks not to take paper bags and to bring your own reusable bags.

Deborah Pendrey is President and Executive Director of the Ojai Valley Green Coalition.

Several other public speakers from Surfrider Foundation, Wishtoyo Foundation, and Ojai Valley Green Coalition and others spoke in support or opposition to the ordinance.

One disturbing comment came from **David van Doren** who stated that at the last time the council discussed a bag ban under a different mayor that he saw a tan car with someone in it who was shoving plastic bags out through the floor board and the mayor at the time said on KVTM that he had never seen so many plastic bags. He also stated they were quickly picked up. David indicated he was not in favor of the ban.

After public comment period concluded, **Mayor Heitmann** turned the meeting to council discussion.

Councilmember Carl Morehouse stated that he is glad that Ventura College is doing a better job at cleaning up after the flea market but that it was mostly due to his urging and through contacts that he had. Irrespective we still see a problem and that this is due to the wind, the prevailing breezes. He also stated that he did not have a lot of faith in the state passing a statewide bag ban. People in this community are environmentally conscientious and forward looking. I recommend that we move ahead with staff recommendations (a) through (d). The move was seconded.

Councilmember Andrews indicated that the last time they had discussed the ordinance, that he would not support it, if it contained the 10-cent paper bag fee. I feel the fee is exorbitant. "As I read through the EIR I find that there are assumptions made about the effectiveness of the ban that have no empirical support in the EIR. They are footnoted, but the footnotes simply refer to other reports that made the same assumptions. And the text of the report clearly identifies these numbers as assumptions. But even if you accepted the assumptions, and that would mean that there would be 17 million paper bags issued at 10-cents each would be a \$1.7 million windfall for the stores. If you reverse the assumption and assume that 65% were use paper bags that would be \$3.9 million windfall. There is no evidence that has been presented that the stores would use this money to support this program. Indeed, when I made my own checks for the cost of bags and it was nowhere near this amount of money. I can buy bags in small quantities on the internet for a 1.5-cents each. I can't support this motion for this reason.

Deputy Mayor Nasarenko stated he was in support of staff recommendations and in support of an ordinance to ban single-use plastic bags. As I mentioned when I was sworn in it was Councilmembers Brian Brennan's seat he filled and this item was his legacy to make Ventura cleaner. He also mentioned community pride, when you use a reusable bag you are showing that you take pride in keeping your community clean. I think the 10-cent fee is a powerful disincentive for people to use paper bags. Money gets people's attention. And over time getting people to use reusable bags is worthwhile.

AUTHOR'S NOTE: When you are elected to and assume public office, you use your intellect and wisdom to serve the people of the City of Ventura and to make good decisions on their behalf and not merely to support an issue to leave your predecessor a "legacy".

Councilmember Mike Tracy stated that he has come full circle on this issue. He stated that over the years he has come to realize that some kind of regulation concerning plastic bags is in order. He would not support this issue at this time. He also stated he did not have faith that the state legislature would pass a statewide ban. He did say that eventually, it will happen.

He wants to allow the state go through its process, because earlier in the evening they were agonizing over a few thousand dollars in the budget and this ordinance requires spending \$24,000 in the first two years just to sell this ordinance to the community. He stated that of the hundreds of state laws passed every year, he doesn't remember the city ever having to educate the public, the state does a pretty good job letting everyone know. For that reason, he will not support the ordinance at this time.

Councilmember Monahan stated he does not use plastic bags, he does not like them and he uses paper bags. Now he has to buy bags. He feels it is premature to act on this program and wants to wait for the state to act and supports the delay in implementing this ordinance.

Mayor Heitmann supported the ordinance because it is time. She also had questions about the 10-cent fee and wants to make sure stores use it to support the ordinance. She want the city staff to interface with the stores and encourage them to use it for education and to provide reusable bags with their names on it as a form of advertisement.

AUTHOR'S NOTE: *While the city can encourage that stores use excess money collected from paper bag fees for educating shoppers and to subsidize or to provide free reusable bags to customers, the city has **no control** over what happens to the money collected. This indicates that the bag ban, as proposed, is the wrong solution and a better solution would be to just ban the thin film bags, and then let market forces operate. Stores would then either distribute thick plastic bags or paper bags. Stores would then be free to distribute bags at no charge or have customers pay for bags. Market forces would then allow manufacturers and retailers to find the most cost effective solution. Customers could still be encouraged to use reusable bags, but if you forget to bring them you don't have to walk out of the store with an armload of groceries and no bag. A You Tube video titled "[ECO Talibans](#)" illustrates this point very well. For more information, read the article "[Bag Bans – Market Driven Solutions Superior](#)". (van Leeuwen, Bag Bans - Market Driven Solutions Superior, 2013)*

At this time Mayor Heitmann called for a vote with Mayor Cheryl Heitmann, Deputy Mayor Erik Nasarenko, and Councilmember Carl E. Morehouse voting in favor of the ordinance and Councilmembers Neal Andrews, James Monahan, and Mike Tracy voted against adopting the ordinance at this time. Councilmember Morehouse and Tracy then discussed a motion to bring the issue back for reconsideration after the state legislative session ends to see if the statewide ban is passed by the California State Legislature and signed into law. This motion was approved by a unanimous vote.

Conclusion

Had it not been for the absence of Councilmember Christy Weir due to illness, the Single-Use Carryout Bag Ordinance would not have resulted in a tie vote and more than likely would have passed. Hence, Venturans have been spared from an onerous plastic bag ban that imposes someone else's solution to a problem on everyone else.

About the Author

Anthony van Leeuwen is the founder of the [Fight The Plastic Bag Ban](#) website and writes extensively on the subject. He holds a bachelors and Master's degree in Electronics Engineering and has over 40 years of experience working in the federal government.

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