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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Referendum Launched to Challenge Milpitas Bag Ban (September 21, 2015).

MILPITAS, CA: The local citizens' group "Stop the Bag Ban" announced today that they are launching a referendum against Milpitas Ordinance 287, passed by the Milpitas City Council last week. Ordinance 287 bans thin-film plastic carryout bags from retailers, adds more expensive composition requirements to paper bags, requires consumers to pay 10 cents to the retailer for paper bags or thick plastic bags, and requires the retailers to track all carryout bag sales for 3 years from the date of sale. The bag ban is scheduled to take effect January 1, 2016.

The previous Milpitas City Council voted 3 – 2 against a bag ban in November, 2013. Since then, two of the majority ruling council members term'd out, and the balance of power changed to support Mayor Esteves to support a bag ban. Council member Giordano remained consistent and opposed the bag ban.

However, since the last Milpitas vote, California state politicians passed a statewide ban, which was then put to a referendum by over 800,000 signatures, including citizens of Milpitas. Californians will vote on the state wide bag ban in November, 2016. The Milpitas City Council decided not to wait for the state vote.

"This is pure folly on the side of the Milpitas City Council," said Don Williams of the Stop the Bag Ban group. "The issue is already on the ballot for November, 2016, but the city council decided that they do not want to wait to see how the residents of Milpitas vote, even though many citizens in Milpitas signed the state wide referendum demanding a vote on this issue. They just went ahead and forced a bag ban on their citizens anyway, which is an abuse of power that shows a lack of respect for the democratic process or for the intelligence of the citizens of Milpitas. That is why we believe this Ordinance should be met with a referendum and the people must be allowed to vote."

"The ugly truth of these bag bans is that no city council has ever put their bag ban to a vote of the people. While proponents of these bag bans claim everybody is for them, we wonder why they didn't just appeal directly to the people of Milpitas 2 years ago with an initiative when they lost the city council vote? And why wouldn't the city council just wait for the statewide vote to approve a bag ban at the state level and not create extra work, laws, and costs for the city of Milpitas? Their actions reflect the truth that the people do not actually support bag bans, so they must, instead, go around twisting the arms of politicians to act without consent of the people."

Stop the Bag Ban sent emails and articles to the city council detailing negative effects and costs of bag bans, pointing out errors in the information they were presented, and detailing the injustice to the people of Milpitas by essentially negating the effect of the vote of their citizens in November, 2016.

"Milpitas was the last significant city in the south bay without a bag ban that burdened their businesses with regulation and accounting and their people with inconvenience and personal

costs associated with bag bans,” Don Williams continued. “We have received many stories of people purposely shopping in Milpitas when the choice is available. Why the city council would willingly give away that competitive advantage, not to mention the freedom of their businesses and people, is completely baffling.”

The group now has 30 days (until October 18) to collect at least 2,634 valid signatures to force the city council to either rescind the Ordinance or put it to a vote of the people of Milpitas.

The Milpitas referendum is available for download at www.stopthebagban.com, or by contacting stopthebagban@gmail.com

For more information or to volunteer, please contact stopthebagban@gmail.com

About the Stop the Bag Ban citizens' group: Founded in 2012, the Stop the Bag Ban citizens' group consists of concerned private citizens from cities across the bay area who oppose the principle, challenge the substance, and point out the negative effects of bag bans. Stop the Bag Ban is not funded or backed by any organization, business, industry, or group and relies only on donations from private citizens.