

StopWaste.Org Single-Use Bag Reduction Ordinance FAQ's

January 25, 2012

What does the ordinance do and when does it go into effect?

The adopted Single-Use Bag Reduction Ordinance bans single-use plastic carryout bags in Alameda County at some stores (see below for opt-out provision and exceptions) as of Jan 1, 2013. Recycled content paper bags may be provided but only if the retailer charges a minimum price of \$0.10 for each bag. The ordinance does not ban single-use bags used to transport produce, bulk food or meat from within a store to the point of sale.

Reusable bags may also be provided but only if the retailer charges a minimum price of \$0.10 for each bag. The \$0.10 price will go up to \$0.25 per bag on January 1, 2015 unless the Alameda County Waste Management Authority Board finds before then that this increase is not necessary to sufficiently discourage single-use bag use.

Which retailers are required to participate?

Stores with sales of packaged food, including drug stores, large stores selling packaged food, pharmacies, supermarkets, grocery stores, convenience food stores, and liquor stores.

The ordinance affects approximately 1900 retailers countywide. Stores must keep records for 18 months on sales of recycled paper bags and reusable bags.

Which retailers are not required to participate?

- Restaurants
- Take-out food establishments
- Retail stores not selling packaged food
- Charitable thrift stores

Retail establishments would be able to provide recycled content paper bags at no cost to customers participating in the WIC and Supplemental Food programs.

A store may provide a reusable bag at no charge if distributed as part of an infrequent and limited time promotional program.

Why not include all retailers in the county?

The ordinance includes the stores that traditionally distribute a high volume of single-use bags. Starting with these stores allows for a program that can be fully funded within StopWaste.Org's current budget and provides an opportunity to gauge the effectiveness of the ordinance. StopWaste.Org can include additional stores in the future.

Are local jurisdictions required to participate?

The ordinance intends to preserve local control while capturing the benefits of working together at a larger scale. Local jurisdictions will be able to "opt-out" of the Single-Use Bag Reduction Ordinance by resolution of their governing Board any time prior to March 2, 2012.

How will the Single-Use Bag Reduction Ordinance be enforced?

Enforcement will be administered and coordinated by StopWaste.Org with information provided by local jurisdiction field inspectors from various departments (watershed, department of health, public works, toxics, etc.).