Senate Bill 54/ Assembly Bill 1080: Single-Use Packaging and Products

IN BRIEF

SB 54/AB 1080 will ensure California is on the forefront of reducing pollution from plastic packaging and products. The bills would set goals to reduce waste from single-use packaging and products and ensure the remaining items are effectively recycled.

BACKGROUND

Every day, single-use packaging and products in California generate tons of non-recyclable and non-compostable waste impacting our health, natural environment, and local governments.

Plastic pollution starts with fossil fuel extraction to create plastic and affects individuals, communities, and ecosystems all along the supply chain; from when the products are manufactured, transported, and used, to when they degrade and emit greenhouse gases or impact the environment as litter. Oil refineries, plastic manufacturers and incinerators tend to be located in disadvantaged communities, which then must bear the brunt of the associated health impacts from industry, such as higher asthma rates. With a planned 40-percent increase in plastic production over the next decade, plastic production will account for 20 percent of global fossil fuel consumption unless we make major policy changes to significantly counter this.

One way to reduce the production of plastics is to focus on its use in packaging. Packaging products are typically designed to be used just once and then discarded and they account for 42 percent of all non-fiber plastic produced.

Unlike natural materials that decompose, nearly every piece of plastic ever produced still exists in our landfills or in the environment. As these items fragment into smaller particles, known as microplastics, they concentrate toxic chemicals and contaminate our food and drinking water sources, ranging from bottled water to table salt to fish and agricultural soils. Exposure to these plastics and associated toxins has been linked to cancers, birth defects, impaired immunity, endocrine disruption and other serious health problems.

While the state and local communities in California have tried to reduce the burden from single-use packaging since the 1980s, taxpayers and local governments still spend over $420 million annually in ongoing efforts to clean up and prevent litter in streets, storm drains, parks and waterways. Not only is cleanup expensive, but it cannot keep pace with the production of single-use disposable items, which continues to grow exponentially.

Existing recycling infrastructure can’t keep pace either. Less than 9 percent of plastic is recycled, and that percentage is dropping since the implementation of China’s National Sword and policies in other countries, which severely restricted the amount of foreign waste these countries accept. These materials are now either piling up in recycling centers, being landfilled, or sent to illegal facilities in Southeast Asia where they are incinerated, or simply dumped in impoverished areas where it is never dealt with. California must reduce the amount of plastics as a result of these realities.

We can no longer afford to wait on this issue. This is why the European Union and other countries that are major purchasers of consumer goods are implementing comprehensive waste reduction frameworks which urge producers to share in the responsibility of reducing waste and designing products to be reusable, recyclable and/or compostable. As the world’s fifth-largest economy, California has a responsibility to lead on solutions to the growing plastic pollution crisis.

SOLUTION

Eliminating non-reusable, non-recyclable and non-compostable products and reducing packaging is by far the most effective, and least expensive way to protect the health of people, wildlife, and the environment. Many reliable and reusable alternatives already exist and the positive results of their use have been proven.
SB 54/AB 1080 establish a comprehensive framework to address the pollution and waste crisis.

- Specifically, single-use plastic packaging and products sold or distributed in California must be reduced, recycled or composted by 75 percent by 2030.
- All single-use packaging and products must be recyclable or compostable on and after 2030.
- As part of a shift towards a more circular economy, the bills also instructs CalRecycle to develop incentives and policies to encourage in-state manufacturing using recycled material generated in California.

CalRecycle will be given authority to adopt regulations to meet these goals, including developing criteria to determine which packaging material qualifies as recyclable or compostable.

**SUPPORT**

- Algalita Marine Research and Education
- Alvarado Street Brewery & Grill
- American Sustainable Business Council
- Audubon California
- Azul
- Breast Cancer Prevention Partners
- California Cannabis Coalition
- California Coastal Protection Network
- California Coastkeeper Alliance
- California Compost Coalition
- California Interfaith Power & Light
- California League of Conservation Voters
- Californians Against Waste
- California Product Stewardship Council
- California ReLEAF
- California Resource Recovery Association
- California State Association of Counties
- California State Parks Foundation
- California Teamsters Public Affairs Council
- CALPIRG
- Center for Biological Diversity
- Center for Oceanic Awareness, Research and Education
- ChicoBag
- Cigarette Butt Pollution Project
- Clean Water Action
- Coastodian
- Colorado Medical Waste, Inc.
- Communication Workers of America District 9, AFL-CIO
- Communications4Good
- Communitas Financial Planning
- Community Environmental Council
- Conscious Container
- Council Member Paul Koretz, 5th District, City of Los Angeles
- Council Member Mark West, City of Imperial Beach
- Defenders of Wildlife
- Distance Learning Consulting
- Dr. Bronner’s
- Eco Imprints
- Ecology Center
- Environment California
- Environmental Defense Center
- Environmental Justice Coalition for Water
- Environmental Working Group
- Friends Committee on Legislation of California
- Full Circle Environmental, Inc.
- GoodLight Natural Candles
- Green Retirement, Inc.
- Green Valley Community Farm
- Greenpeace
- Guitarfish Music Festival
- Heal the Bay
- Inland Empire Disposal Association
- Inland Ocean Coalition
- Joshua Tree Music Festival
- Kasperorganics
- Kern Refuse Disposal, Inc.
- Kite Music Productions/Flying Kite Motion Pictures
- LA Hauler
- Latinos in Action
- Leadership & Strategy for Sustainable Systems
- League of Women Voters of California
- Long Beach Environmental Alliance
- Long Beach Gray Panthers
- Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy (LAANE)
- Los Angeles County Waste Management Association
- Los Angeles Waterkeeper
- Lutheran Office of Public Policy - California
- MD Global
- Monterey Regional Waste Management District
- Napa Recycling & Waste Services
- National Parks Conservation Association
- National Stewardship Action Council
- Natural Resources Council of Maine
- Natural Resources Defense Council
- No Plastic Oceans
- Northcoast Environmental Center
- Northern California Recycling Association
- Oceana
- Owl Post Calligraphy
- Pacific Forest Trust
- Pacoima Beautiful
- Pharmacists Planning Services, Inc.
- Pier 23 Café Restaurant & Bar
- Plastic Pollution Coalition
- Ponce's Mexican Restaurant
- UPSTREAM
- R3 Consulting Group, Inc.
- Recology
- Refill Madness, LLC
- Republic Services
- Repurpose
- ReThink Waste
- San Francisco Baykeeper
- San Francisco Department of the Environment
- Save Our Shores
- Sea Hugger
- Service Employees International Union California
- Seventh Generation Advisors
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**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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