



June 25, 2024

The Honorable Chair Ben Allen
Senate Environmental Quality Committee

Re: SB 1053 (Blakespear & Allen) Solid waste: reusable grocery bags: standards: plastic film prohibition – SUPPORT

Dear Senator Allen,

On behalf of the above **76** organizations, we write in strong support of SB 1053 (Blakespear & Allen) which ends the use of thicker plastic bags in grocery stores and convenience stores and reduces California's dependency on plastic. In 2014, California passed the nation's first ban on plastic bags. SB 270 (Padilla) required all plastic bags used in grocery, convenience, and retail stores that include grocery, to be reusable. After a decade under SB 270, it has become clear that California has not eliminated plastic grocery bags. The standards for reusable bags have resulted in exempt bags that are still made of thicker plastic, high-density polyethylene, or HDPE.

However, relatively few consumers re-use these exempt plastic bags for shopping. Investigative reports found that even when the bags were returned to the store for recycling, many still found their way to landfills.¹ CalRecycle's statewide residential disposal reports suggest that over 5 billion bags in this category may have been landfilled in 2021, marking a significant reversal from several years of declining disposal. CalRecycle's 2018² and 2021³ Waste Characterization studies correlate with Alameda County's findings; the agency reported a 50-65% growth in the volume of "Plastic Grocery and Other Merchandise Bags" since 2018, exceeding 140,000 tons annually—a level not seen since 2003. According to Alameda County data sampled from a subset of stores, there was about an 800% increase in stores' compliant thick plastic bag purchases from 2015 to 2023.

SB 1053 (Blakespear & Allen) would only allow paper at check out and eliminate the existing exemption of plastic film. The bill now clearly defines point of sale to cover all transactions where purchased goods may be transferred to a customer. Further, SB 1053 increases standards for reusable bags to ensure they are not replaced by a new version of an HDPE bag with plastic film material, or a non-plastic bag that can be easily damaged and is not durable. Lastly, SB 1053 increases the recyclability standard of paper bags to be made from 50% postconsumer recycled materials.

From production to disposal, plastic waste is detrimental to the environment and human health. Plastics are primarily made from fossil fuels, and the extraction and refinement of fossil feedstocks for plastics release an array of toxic substances into the air and water, including known carcinogens and neurotoxins.⁴ Upon disposal, plastic does not biodegrade, and toxic chemicals released from plastics damage soil

¹ Gutman, M., Simon, E., Park, C., Simpson, T., Kofsky, J., Schlosberg, J., Brooksbank, T., Yamashita, S., & Kim, S. R. (2023, May 23). *We put dozens of trackers in plastic bags for recycling. Many were trashed.* ABC News. <https://abcnews.go.com/US/put-dozens-trackers-plastic-bags-recycling-trashed/story?id=99509422>

² California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery, 2018 Facility-Based Characterization of Solid Waste in California (2020). Sacramento, California.

³ California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery, 2021 Facility-Based Characterization of Solid Waste in California (2022). Sacramento, California.

⁴ The Plastics Production Problem. Center for Biological Diversity. (n.d.). <https://www.biologicaldiversity.org/campaigns/plastic-production/index.html>

quality and leeches into groundwater. Plastic bags are one of the most found pollutants in our seas⁵, and marine life ingests microplastics that are detrimental to their health.⁶ Therefore it is necessary to curb California's plastic production as much as possible to preserve our environment and health.

For these reasons, we support SB 1053 (Blakespear & Allen) to reduce plastic waste in California by closing the exempt bag loophole at grocery stores and retail grocers to further a sustainable future.

Sincerely,



Dr. Elizabeth Dougherty
Executive Director
Wholly H2O



Katie McCammon
Program Director
350 Sacramento



Kathi King
Director of Climate Education and
Leadership
Community Environmental
Council



Irene Kao
Executive Director
Courage California



Erica Donnelly-Greenan
Executive Director
Save Our Shores



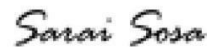
Miho Ligare
Plastic Pollution Policy Manager
Surfrider Foundation



Laura Anthony
Program Coordinator
Save the Albatross Coalition



Elise Kalfayan
Board Member
Glendale Environmental
Coalition



Sarai Sosa
Constituent
Green Behind the Scenes



Doug Kobold
Executive Director
California Product Stewardship
Council



Dennessa Atilas
Organizer
Indivisible CA: StateStrong



David Levine
President
American Sustainable Business
Council

⁵ Merran, J. (Ed.). (2018, June). Building A Clean Swell: 2018 Report. Ocean Conservancy.
<https://oceanconservancy.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/FINAL-2018-ICC-REPORT.pdf>

⁶ Understanding plastic pollution and its impact on lives. United Nations. (2023, June 5).
<https://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/may-2023/understanding-plastic-pollution-and-its-impact-lives#:~:text=Unlike%20other%20materials%2C%20plastic%20does.can%20cause%20serious%20health%20impacts> .

Dan Howells
Climate Campaigns Director
Green America

Nina Atkind
Chapter Manager
Surfrider San Francisco

Sydney Harris
Policy Director
Upstream

Bill Allayaud
Calif. Director of Gov't Affairs
Environmental Working Group

Leslie Tamminen
Director
7th Generation Advisors

Andria Ventura
Legislative and Policy Director
Clean Water Action

David Lewis
Executive Director
Save The Bay

Suzanne Hume
Educational Director &
Founder
CleanEarth4Kids.org

Nicole C. Sasaki
Staff Attorney
San Francisco Baykeeper

Christina Scaringe
California Senior Legislative
Specialist
Center for Biological Diversity

David Diaz
Executive Director
Active San Gabriel Valley

Maura Monagan
Policy & Government Affairs
Manager
LA Waterkeeper

Nancy Faulstich
Executive Director
Regeneración - Pajaro Valley
Climate Action

Jim Lindburg
Legislative Consultant
Friends Committee on
Legislation of California

Dianna Cohen
Co-Founder & CEO
Plastic Pollution Coalition

Jackie Nuñez
Founder
The Last Plastic Straw

Thomas R. Fox
Senior Legislative Counsel
Center for Environmental
Health

Jack Eidt
Co-Founder
SoCal 350 Climate Action

Jessica Jane Robinson
NCRA President
Northern California Recycling
Association

Peter Junker
Technical Assistant
Safe For Home Products dba
Naturepedic

Janet Cox
CEO
Climate Action California

Aditi Varshneya
Network Development Manager
GAIA (Global Alliance for
Incinerator Alternatives)

Sam Pearse
Campaigns Director
Story of Stuff Project

Julie Wedge
Director
CA ReThink Disposables

Emily Parker
Coastal and Marine Scientist
Heal the Bay

Maimoona Block
Executive Director
Sea Hugger

Anoushka Tamhane
Director
Bay Area Youth Lobbying
Initiative

Krystal Raynes
Policy Associate
Californians Against Waste

Alison Waliszewski
Director of Policy and
Programs
The 5 Gyres Institute

Evan Minton
CA State Senior Policy &
Programmatic Manager
Voices for Progress

Alicia Nichols-Gonzalez
California State Manager

Alejandra Warren
Executive Director

Shaney Darden
Founder

Mothers Out Front



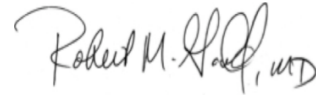
Candice Dickens-Russel
CEO
Friends of the Los Angeles
River

Plastic Free Future



Ruth Abbe
President
Zero Waste USA


The Keep A Breast Foundation



Robert M. Gould, MD
President
San Francisco Bay Physicians for
Social Responsibility



Sakereh Carter
Senior Policy Strategist
Sierra Club CA



Tevin Schmitt
Watershed Scientist
Wishtoyo Foundation



Martin Bourque
Executive Director
Ecology Center



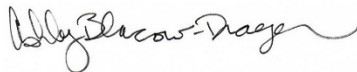
Jenn Engstrom
State Director
California Public Interest
Research Group (CALPIRG)



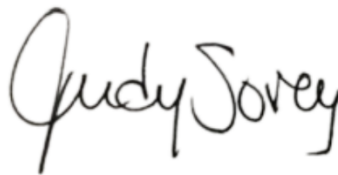
Clara Castronovo
Board Chair
CALPIRG students



Catherine Dodd PhD RN
Policy Consultant
FACTS Families Advocating for
Chemical and Toxics Safety



Ashley Blacow-Draeger
Pacific Policy and
Communications Manager
Oceana



Judy Sorey
Volunteer/Advocate
350 Bay Area Action



Tomas Valadez
California Policy Associate
Azul



Cheryl Auger
President
Ban SUP (Single Use Plastic)



Anita Ghazarian
President
Indivisible Alta Pasadena



Dr. Anja Brandon
Associate Director, U.S. Plastics
Policy
Ocean Conservancy



Mac Sellars
Strategy & Innovation Lead
r.World




Lauren Weston
Executive Director
Acterra: Action for a Healthy
Planet



Cody Phillips
Staff Attorney
California Coastkeeper Alliance



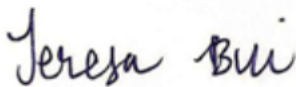
Hayden Sloan
Strategic Director of
Communications
Race to Zero Waste



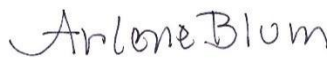
Kathy Schaeffer
Legislative Coordinator
Climate Reality Project – San
Fernando Valley



Andrew Feil
Executive Director
Every Neighborhood Project



Teresa Bui
Climate Policy Director
Pacific Environment



Arlene Blum, PhD
Executive Director
Green Science Policy Institute



Dave Henson
Executive Director
Occidental Arts and Ecology
Center



Kat Palardy
Teacher
Aveson Global Leadership
Academy



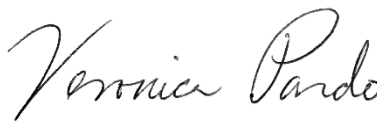
Isabel Storey
VP, Legislation
Santa Monica Democratic
Club



Thomas Helme
Co-founder
Valley Improvement Projects



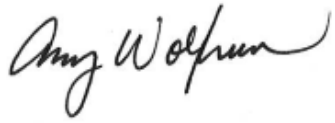
Nancy Buermeyer
Director of Program & Policy
Breast Cancer Prevention
Partners



Veronica Pardo
Regulatory Affairs Director
Resource Recovery Coalition
of California



Luke Hoekstra
Executive Director
Kings River Land Trust

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amy Wolfrum". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Amy Wolfrum
Director, California Policy and Government Affairs
Monterey Bay Aquarium