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CITY OF LOS ANGELES GREATER GRIFFITH PARK NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

Your Neighborhood. Your Voice. Your Council.

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June 29, 2010

Honorable Antonio Villaraigosa
Mayor City Of Los Angeles
200 North Spring St., Rm. 303
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: AB 1998 (Brownley) Plastic Bag Ban

Dear Mayor Villaraigosa,

We urge your support for Assembly Bill 1998 by Assembly Member Julia Brownley, which would ban environmentally-damaging plastic bags. The estimated 19 billion plastic bags that California retailers distribute annually are a primary source of urban litter and water pollution, and pose a threat to wildlife.

Plastic bags are a problem product and litter-prone by design: light, aerodynamic and easily transported by rain and wind. Plastic bags can become litter even when initially 'properly' disposed, blowing from trash receptacles, trucks, transfer stations and disposal facilities.

Plastic litter pollution is a serious and growing problem. Urban litter accounts for up to 80% of marine debris (ocean pollution) and, because plastic bags never biodegrade in the marine environment, they pose an ongoing threat to wildlife causing death to birds, marine turtles and other sensitive species that mistake them for food or become entangled. Even as the bags break apart into smaller plastic particles they pose a threat by attracting ambient toxins and infiltrating the food web. Already, plastic outweighs plankton in parts of the North Pacific Gyre by 46 times.

Plastic bags contaminate recycling facilities and cannot be easily recycled. Efforts to recycle plastic bags in ratepayer-financed curbside programs have proven to be ineffective and costly. A cost analysis for the City of Los Angeles placed the net cost of recovering plastic bags at more than \$560/ton, nearly 4 times the cost of recycling all other materials.

Californians are currently paying for single-use carryout bags twice. First, Californians pay up to \$40 per household per year to offset the cost of the nearly 1,000 "free" bags received from grocers.

Second, Californians pay up to \$200 per household per year in state and local fees and taxes to clean up litter and waste associated with single-use bags.

Banning plastic bags will significantly reduce plastic litter pollution and will encourage consumers to switch to reusable bags and other less environmentally-damaging bag options. We respectfully urge your support of Assembly Bill 1998 by Assembly Member Julia Brownley.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ron Ostrow".

Ron Ostrow, President
Greater Griffith Park Neighborhood Council

cc: Senator Curran Price
Councilman Tom LaBonge
LA City Council Members
Jessica Kornberg, Secretary
GGPNC Governing Board