



Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Plastic Bag Ordinances Move Forward in Coastal Cities

Wide Community Support for reduction strategies in San Diego and Encinitas

SAN DIEGO, CA – The San Diego City Council's Natural Resources Committee voted Wednesday to direct the City Attorney's office to draft a plastic bag reduction ordinance. The City of Encinitas went even further, accepting the most comprehensive option offered by its Environmental Committee to phase in a ban on plastic bags and a fee for paper.

Environmental groups, community and neighborhood organizations, businesses and individuals crowded both meetings in overwhelming support of moving forward. Although industry groups called for a wait-and-see or recycling only solution, decision-makers took a bolder step.

"We're thrilled with the momentum behind this important issue," said Danielle Miller, Outreach Director for San Diego Coastkeeper. "The plastic bag issue ties in global warming, marine debris, community health, and quality of life. This is a fantastic opportunity for the city of San Diego to join other leaders in the state to find a solution."

The San Diego City Council's Committee voted 3-1 to direct the City Attorney to draft an ordinance to address single-use plastic bags after more than a dozen individuals testified or read letters urging the Committee to take decisive action. The only public dissenter was a 'Plastic Bag Monster' a creature covered in 500 plastic bags that complained that an ordinance could drive him out of San Diego and bragged that an ordinance focused solely on recycling wouldn't make a dent in his livelihood.

No such monsters appeared last evening at the Encinitas City Council hearing. Instead more than a dozen residents showed up to speak in support of an ordinance that would phase out the use of plastic bags and institute a tax on paper bags, leaving business the option of charging costumers for plastic bags until the ban is completely in place.

“What was social engineering, was corporate America telling us that we need to embrace waste and that’s what we’ve done,” stated council member Teresa Barth, before making the motion to adopt the ban. Council members Teresa Barth, James Bond, and Maggie Houlihan voted to adopt the ban, responding to the overwhelming public support at the meeting.

Coastkeeper Legal Director Gabriel Solmer was pleased with both outcomes yesterday, “The victory in Encinitas shows cities like San Diego that this is possible, it’s needed, and the public will support it.”

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Founded in 1995, San Diego Coastkeeper protects the region’s bays, beaches, watersheds and ocean for the people and wildlife that depend on them. We balance community outreach, education, and advocacy to promote stewardship of clean water and a healthy coastal ecosystem.