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For Immediate Release

PLASTIC BAG BAN SUPPORTERS STATEMENT ON CERTIFICATION OF SIGNATURES BY PLASTIC BAG INDUSTRY ON SB 270 REFERENDUM

Also Announce New Support for Local Bans in San Diego, Sacramento, Santa Barbara County, Oceanside and American Canyon

SACRAMENTO – California vs. Big Plastic, the coalition of local officials and environmental, labor, and business groups supporting the state’s plastic bag ban, today issued the following statement after California Secretary of State Alex Padilla certified signatures gathered by the plastic bag industry that will force a referendum in November 2016 on the state’s plastic ban signed into law by Governor Jerry Brown (SB 270).

In addition, the group announced that officials from several additional California jurisdictions said they will move forward with local plastic bag bans of their own, as the effective date of the law is frozen by the qualification of signatures. They include San Diego, Santa Barbara County, Sacramento, Oceanside, and American Canyon.

“It’s not surprising that after spending more than \$3.2 million, 98 percent of which is from out of state, the plastic bag industry has bought its way onto the California ballot to protect its profits,” said Mark Murray of Californians vs. Big Plastic. “Every poll shows that Californians strongly support the law, and the \$30 million to \$50 million it will cost the plastics industry to launch a full-fledged campaign in 2016 will be proven to be an act of political malpractice, particularly since nearly half the state will no longer have plastic bags by election day. We are confident that Californians will protect a law that is already in place in 138 communities that will save marine wildlife, reduce litter, and save taxpayers millions of dollars.

“Single-use plastic shopping bags pose a costly burden on our environment and our economy. After listening to the public, hundreds of local elected officials, the state legislature and the Governor have moved to eliminate plastic bags. Virtually all of the plastic bags sold in California are produced by just three out-of-state corporations. And these corporations and their chemical suppliers have made it clear that they will do and say anything, and pay any price to continue to sell plastic bags in California.”

[An investigation into deceptive signature gathering practices of the plastic bag industry](#) is pending with the California Attorney General after widespread complaints of fraud by voters.

[A recent USC Dornsife/LA Times poll](#) showed solid and broad support for the law with 60 percent approval. That poll also shows that support for banning plastic bags is even higher in communities that have already eliminated them.

“The citizens of San Diego treasure our vibrant communities and beautiful coastline, as well as a healthy ocean, and that’s why the pollution caused by billions of these single-use plastic bags simply can’t continue,” says San Diego City Council President Sherri Lightner.

“Eliminating the statewide uniform ban on single-use plastic bags is bad for our environment and economy,” notes Santa Barbara County Supervisor Salud Carbajal. “It would result in the consumption of hundreds of millions of non-biodegradable bags and hundreds of local bag ban regulations that would make compliance both confusing and costly for businesses. This is why I stand with other community leaders and residents of Santa Barbara County to ban single-use plastic bags.”

Murray noted that the plastics industry was soundly defeated in the only previous vote on a plastic bag ban in California. Voters in the town of Fairfax supported its bag ban by more than a 4-1 margin (78.5-21.5%) in 2008.

"Out-of-state plastic bag companies may have millions of dollars to buy their way onto the ballot, but they're just delaying California's inevitable transition away from wasteful plastic bags," said Sarah Rose of the California League of Conservation Voters. "Time and time again Californians have shown big polluters that citizen voices are more powerful than those special interests, and we'll do it again. Two words for plastic bag manufacturers: Game on."

"It's a shame that deceptive tactics in collecting signatures allowed this referendum to qualify," said Kathryn Phillips, Director of Sierra Club California. "Fortunately, Californians are smart voters. Once they understand the real intent of this measure, they'll vote with the environment. They'll vote 'yes' to retain the reasonable statewide bag ban."

"Out-of-state polluters are going to keep on dumping millions of pounds of plastic into our ocean," said Dan Jacobson of Environment California. "Nothing we use for five minutes should pollute our environment for hundreds of years."

“This is nothing more than a greedy attempt by out of state plastic bag makers to mislead California’s voters for their own gain,” said Linda Escalante, Policy Advocate for the Natural Resources Defense Council. “Single use plastic bags litter our neighborhoods and harm our rivers, lakes, coast, ocean and wildlife and there is broad support for the new law to phase them out for good.”

"Surfrider Foundation has been working tirelessly over the past seven years in communities and at the statewide level to address the issue of plastic pollution," states Surfrider Legal Director Angela Howe. "It’s disturbing to think that the plastics companies can swoop in and undo a major statewide victory for our coasts, but rest assured that Surfrider and our coalition partners will continue to fight for this ground-breaking environmental law to come to fruition in California.”

A link to the contributions by plastic companies to the campaign can be found [here](#). For more information, visit www.CAvsBigPlastic.com and follow us on Twitter @CAvsBigPlastic.

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