



**COUNCIL PRESIDENT PRO TEM**  
**SHERRI S. LIGHTNER**  
*CITY OF SAN DIEGO – COUNCIL DISTRICT 1*  
**News Release**

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For Immediate Release  
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**Lightner Pushes for Citywide Plastic Bag Reduction Ordinance**

SAN DIEGO – The City Council’s Rules and Economic Development Committee today unanimously voted to move ahead with crafting an ordinance to reduce single-use plastic shopping bags at grocery stores and other retail outlets in the City of San Diego.

Council President Pro Tem Sherri Lightner, who chairs the committee, said San Diego is poised to become one of the largest U.S. cities to take such a positive step toward bettering the environment and saving taxpayers money.

“Now is the time for San Diego to take a leadership role on limiting single-use plastic bags and reducing the pollution associated with them,” said Lightner. “As we can see from best practices from other cities, the benefits are real and can be done in a way that won’t burden our local businesses or our most vulnerable residents.”

San Diego would join 80 other municipalities in California including Los Angeles and Long Beach that prohibit or restrict plastic bags.

An ordinance would reinforce San Diego’s growing reputation for environmental stewardship and help reduce the approximately 123,000 tons of plastic bags that Californians throw out each year. It is estimated that less than 5 percent of the 24 billion plastic bags used each year are being recycled.

According to a report presented by the City’s Environmental Services Department, 500 million single-use plastic bags are distributed annually in San Diego. Only about 3 percent of those are recycled, with the bulk ending up in the trash or polluting our neighborhoods.

In addition to the environmental impacts, the City spends approximately \$160,000 each year in landfill clean up costs alone, not including costs for plastic bag litter removal from streets, storm drains, parks and beaches.

Lightner said common-sense limits on plastic bag use will conserve resources, reduce litter on our beaches, protect the health of wildlife and minimize ocean and waterway pollution as well as divert waste from the Miramar Landfill, helping to extend its lifespan and reduce taxpayer costs.

Among the recommendations being considered for the San Diego ordinance are a ban on plastic bags in supermarkets, large stores that sell food items as well as drug and convenience stores. It might also require stores to charge customers 10 cents per paper bag used as an alternative but exempt restaurants, nonprofits, food stamp recipients and produce and meat products.

The City also would engage in education and outreach efforts to help change consumer behavior and seek sponsorship opportunities to provide residents with reusable shopping bags.

The Rules and Economic Development Committee is scheduled to receive a staff update on the draft ordinance at its Oct. 23 meeting.

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*Sherri Lightner is the Councilmember for Council District One of the City of San Diego, which includes the communities of Carmel Valley, Del Mar Mesa, La Jolla, Pacific Highlands Ranch, Torrey Hills, Torrey Pines, and University City. She took office December 8, 2008.*