



## BYOBAG: MARIN

A project of the County of Marin, EcoMom Alliance, Green Sangha, Iresuse.org and Teens Turning Green

### Problems

- Californians use 19 billion plastic carryout bags annually, or 600 per second.
- Fewer than 5% of these bags are recycled.
- Marin residents throw away 138 million bags annually; these end up in our landfill, streets, and parks.
- Each year, 14 million trees are cut to produce 10 billion paper grocery bags.
- It takes more than four times the energy to manufacture a paper bag as it does to make a plastic bag
- Paper bags use more space in landfills than plastic bags.
- Plastic bags and their scraps are among the most frequently-found items of litter on street and coastline cleanups, and in scientific trawls of the Pacific Ocean.
- Non-biodegradable plastic bags, while lighter and less energy-intensive than paper bags in manufacture, have an unsustainable legacy, including the potential of long-term leaching of plastic chemicals into the environment.

### What We're Doing About It

Marin County is joining communities across the state and around the world in a movement to end wasteful single-use packaging and reduce litter which is unsightly, costly, disruptive to habitat, and harmful to wildlife. Plastic bags have been restricted or banned outright in 11 nations, 22 municipalities and provinces outside the US, 13 US municipalities (8 in California), and 1 state.

Supervisor Charles McGlashan, working with colleague Susan Adams, has authored an ordinance that will ban or put a charge on throw-away plastic and paper bags. With support from community groups and grocers, we hope to pass it in 2011. The BYOBAG campaign has been focused very simply on raising public awareness – creating the support and political will needed to pass this legislation.

EcoMom Alliance, Green Sangha, iReuse.com, and Teens Turning Green are founding partners in this local movement to contribute to the health of our planet. We are joined by these friends in sustainability: Californians Against Waste, Clean Water Action, Environment California, Save the Bay, Sea Turtle Restoration Network, Sierra Club Marin, Surfrider, and Sustainable San Rafael. Many of these organizations also belong to the Clean Seas Coalition, a group dedicated to restoring the purity and health of our Pacific Ocean and coastline.

### Goals

- Decrease waste
- Reduce pollution of air, soil, and water
- Save resources (fossil fuel, trees, water)
- Decrease litter
- Reduce costs for stores (each plastic bag costs the grocer one cent; paper bags cost 3-10 cents)
- Improve city and town efficiency (litter clean-up takes city employees' time when all municipalities are working hard to balance their budgets and maintain vital services)
- Reinforce the community ethic of stewardship and care for the earth

### What Stores Can Do

- Proclaim BYOBAG Day on Earth Day 2011, April 22. We can help you with: a sample press release; signs to go outside your store; displays at each check-out counter; in-house newsletter messages; check-out "stuffers." We can also provide volunteers to greet customers outside your store.
- Make reusable bags available and prominently displayed at check-out counters or aisle ends.
- Give a generous credit for each reusable bag to each customer who brings one on Earth Day (5-25 cents, to catch customers' attention and reinforce the message).
- Sign a letter endorsing a county-wide end to free throw-away bags in all retail operations.

### Benefits to Stores

- Save money on bags (reducing waste is good for business!)
- Meet organizational objectives to improve your green profile
- Enhance respect in the community by taking leadership in the drive to zero waste

### KEY DATES TO REMEMBER

#### BYOBAG Days:

Earth Day, Friday, April 22, 2011; California BYOBAG Day, Thursday, December 15, 2011; and every day you go shopping!

*Anticipated implementation of the first single-use bag ordinance in Marin County: January 1, 2012*