

Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council Resolution

Resolution Regarding Single-Use Plastic Bags

Whereas, the amount of debris in our marine environment has increased drastically over the last few decades, one of the sources being the 19 billion plastic grocery bags distributed in California each year.

Whereas, single-use plastic bags on our local beaches, and in our tributaries and oceans, are having detrimental effects on our ocean's habitat and marine life, and associated recreation and tourism.

Whereas, single use plastic bags are consistently among the top five most common types of litter found at beaches surrounding the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary and over 26,000 plastic bags have been removed since 2007.

Whereas, plastic bags never fully biodegrade, they are instead broken down into tiny pieces from the sun through photodegradation, which attract and accumulate various toxins that then enter the ocean food chain.

Whereas, plastic bags threaten a variety of marine life including whales, sea otters, pinnipeds, sea turtles, and sea birds through ingestion, choking, infection and/or entanglement.

Whereas, single-use plastic bags are of particular concern to the health of the endangered Pacific leatherback sea turtle populations as they easily mistake these bags for jellyfish, their main prey source of which the waters of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary are a key foraging area.

Whereas, recycling is not a sufficient solution to plastic bag pollution and there exist readily and widely available alternatives to single-use plastic bags such as reusable bags.

Therefore, be it resolved that the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council hereby supports federal and statewide legislative efforts and local ordinances by municipalities and counties to ban the use and distribution of single-use plastic bags.

Be it further resolved that the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council hereby supports the efforts of local businesses to transition away from single-use plastic bags.

Be it further resolved that the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council hereby supports efforts to remove plastic bag litter from the shores, rivers, and waters of the Sanctuary.

Approved at the April 21, 2011 Sanctuary Advisory Council meeting in Carmel Valley.

Vote: 12 in favor, 0 opposed