

California becomes first US state to ban plastic bags

September 30 2014



Plastic grocery bags are seen in the back of a car on November 17, 2010 in La Crescenta, California

California became the first US state Tuesday to ban single-use plastic bags, as Governor Jerry Brown signed the measure into law.

Under the legislation, single-use bags will disappear from grocery stores and pharmacies from July 1, 2015, and then from convenience and

liquor stores from July 1, 2016.

Lawmakers passed the bill earlier this month, and Brown had until the end of September to sign it.

"This bill is a step in the right direction—it reduces the torrent of plastic polluting our beaches, parks and even the vast ocean itself," Brown said in a statement.

"We're the first to ban these bags, and we won't be the last."

The bill allows stores to charge 10 cents for paper or reusable bags. Similar bans, backed by environmentalists, are already in place in other California cities including Los Angeles and San Francisco.

A ban was opposed by Republicans who argued it would be too much government meddling for small- and medium-sized businesses, and was also contested by bag manufacturers who fear job losses.

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Citation: California becomes first US state to ban plastic bags (2014, September 30) retrieved 20 April 2024 from https://phys.org/news/2014-09-california-state-plastic-bags_1.html

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