

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This section summarizes the characteristics of the proposed ordinance and the significant environmental impacts, mitigation measures, and residual impacts associated with the proposed Single-Use Carryout Bag Ordinance.

PROJECT SYNOPSIS

Project Applicant

City of Huntington Beach
2000 Main Street
Huntington Beach, CA 92648

Project Characteristics

The City of Huntington Beach proposes to adopt a Single-Use Carryout Bag Ordinance that would prohibit distribution of plastic carry-out bags in commercial point of sale purchases within Huntington Beach, and establish a ten (10) cent charge on the issuance of recyclable paper carry-out bags at all stores that meet at least one of the criteria listed below. All stores affected by the proposed ordinance would be required to provide reusable bags to customers either for sale or at no charge, and each store would be strongly encouraged to promote the use of reusable bags through staff education and customer outreach.

Stores located within Huntington Beach that would be affected include the following:

1. Full-line, self-service retail stores with gross annual sales of two million dollars (\$2,000,000), or more, that sell a line of dry goods, canned goods, or nonfood items and some perishable items;
2. Stores of at least ten thousand (10,000) square feet of retail space that generate sales or use tax pursuant to the Bradley-Burns Uniform Local Sales and Use Tax Law (Part 1.5 (commencing with Section 7200) of Division 2 of the Business and Professions Code) and that have a pharmacy licensed pursuant to Chapter 9 (commencing with Section 4000) of Division 2 of the Business and Professions Code; or
3. Drug stores, pharmacies, supermarkets, grocery stores, convenience food stores, food marts, or other entities engaged in the retail sale of a limited line of goods that includes milk, bread, soda, snack foods, including those stores with a Type 20 or 21 license issued by the Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control.

The Ordinance would prohibit the distribution of compostable and biodegradable plastic carry-out bags, as they are included in the definition of a plastic carry-out bag. The Ordinance would impose a ten (10) cent charge on recyclable paper carry-out bags, and requires that the paper bags be one hundred percent (100%) recyclable overall, contain a minimum of forty percent (40%) post-consumer recycled material, and be accepted for recycling in curbside programs within the City, among other criteria. The Ordinance further requires that reusable bags be specifically designed and manufactured for a minimum lifetime of 125 uses, be machine



washable or made from a material that can be cleaned or disinfected, does not contain lead, cadmium, or other heavy element in toxic amounts, among other criteria. Plastic bags that are a minimum of 2.25 mils thick are considered to be reusable bags per the definition in the Ordinance.

The Ordinance would exempt from the ten (10) cent charge those customers who are participating in either the California Special Supplemental Food Program for the Women, Infants, and Children or the Supplemental Food Program. All applicable stores must provide at the point of sale, free of charge, either reusable bags or recyclable paper carry-out bags or both, to these customers, at the store's option. Customers would have the option to use their own reusable bags, or no bag at all.

The intent of the Ordinance is to reduce the environmental impacts related to the use of single-use carryout bags, and to promote a shift toward the use of reusable bags. It is anticipated that by prohibiting single-use plastic carryout bags and creating a mandatory charge for each paper bag distributed by retailers, the proposed Ordinance would reduce the number of single-use bags consumed within the City while promoting a shift to the use of reusable bags by Huntington Beach retail customers.

Under the proposed Ordinance, single-use plastic carryout bags are defined as bags made from petroleum or bio-based plastic (i.e., bags made with at least 90% starch from renewable resources such as corn, potato, tapioca, or wheat, or from polyesters, manufactured from hydrocarbons, or starch-polyester blends) that are less than 2.25 mils thick. The proposed Single-Use Carryout Bag Ordinance would prohibit retailers from distributing both petroleum and bio-based single-use carryout plastic bags at the point of sale. The proposed Ordinance would not prohibit the distribution of plastic "product bags," as defined, which include bags without handles provided to a customer to carry produce, meats, or other food items to the point of sale inside a store or to prevent such food items from coming into contact with other purchased items.

The Ordinance would not apply to stores of less than 10,000 square feet that are not included in one of the three specified categories. It also would not apply to restaurants and other food service providers; therefore, it would allow these retailers to continue to provide plastic bags to customers for prepared take-out food intended for consumption off of the food provider's premises.

The Single-Use Carryout Bag Ordinance would also impose a mandatory charge of ten cents (\$0.10) for paper carryout bags at Huntington Beach stores covered by the Ordinance. The mandatory charge is intended to provide a disincentive to customers to request paper bags when shopping at regulated stores and is intended to promote a shift toward the use of reusable bags by Huntington Beach consumers.

The mandatory charge would bill customers for each paper carryout bag provided by the affected stores. Revenues generated from the charge would be used to compensate the affected stores for increased costs related to compliance with the Ordinance, actual costs associated with providing recyclable paper carryout bags or reusable bags, or costs associated with a store's educational materials or education campaign encouraging the use of reusable bags. All stores would be required to keep complete and accurate records or documents, for a minimum period



of three years from the date of sale, of the total number of recyclable paper carryout bags provided, and the total amount of monies collected for providing recyclable paper carryout bags. The records completed by the store would be available for inspection at no cost to the City during regular business hours by any City employee authorized to enforce the Ordinance.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The City's objectives for the proposed Ordinance include:

- Reducing the number of single-use plastic bags distributed by retailers and used by customers in Huntington Beach
- Deterring the use of paper bags by customers in Huntington Beach
- Promoting a shift toward the use of reusable carryout bags by retail customers in Huntington Beach
- Reducing the environmental impacts related to single-use plastic carryout bags, such as impacts to biological resources (including marine environments) and water quality
- Avoiding litter and the associated adverse impacts to stormwater systems, aesthetics and the marine environment (Pacific Ocean and Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve)

ALTERNATIVES

As required by CEQA, the EIR examines a range of alternatives to the proposed project that feasibly attain most of the basic project objectives. These alternatives are described and evaluated in Section 6.0, *Alternatives*. Studied alternatives include:

- **Alternative 1: No Project** - *The no project alternative assumes that the Huntington Beach Single-Use Carryout Bag Ordinance would not occur. The existing retail stores would continue to provide single-use plastic bags and would continue to provide single-use paper bags free of charge to the customers.*
- **Alternative 2: Ban on Single-Use Plastic Bags at all Retail Establishments** - *This alternative would prohibit all retail establishments in Huntington Beach from providing single-use plastic carryout bags to customers at the point of sale, including restaurants and other retailers not covered by the proposed ordinance.*
- **Alternative 3: Mandatory Charge of \$0.25 for Paper Bags** - *This alternative would continue to prohibit three specified categories of retail establishments in Huntington Beach from providing single-use plastic carryout bags to customers at the point of sale, but would increase the mandatory charge for single-use paper bags from \$0.10 to \$0.25.*



SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Table ES-1 includes a brief description of the environmental issues relative to the proposed ordinance, the identified significant environmental impacts, proposed mitigation measures, and residual impacts. Impacts are categorized by classes. Class I impacts are defined as significant, unavoidable adverse impacts which require a statement of overriding considerations to be issued pursuant to the *CEQA Guidelines* §15093 if the project is approved. Class II impacts are significant adverse impacts that can be feasibly mitigated to less than significant levels and which require findings to be made under Section 15091 of the *CEQA Guidelines*. Class III impacts are considered less than significant impacts, and Class IV impacts are beneficial impacts.

Table ES-1 Summary of Significant Environmental Impacts, Mitigation Measures, and Residual Impacts		
Impact	Mitigation Measures	Significance After Mitigation
AIR QUALITY		
Impact AQ-1 A shift toward reusable bags could potentially alter processing activities related to bag production, which has the potential to increase air pollutant emissions. However, the proposed Single-Use Carryout Bag Ordinance is expected to substantially reduce the number of single-use plastic carryout bags, thereby reducing the total number of bags manufactured and overall emissions associated with bag manufacture and use. Therefore, air quality impacts related to alteration of processing activities would be Class IV, <i>beneficial</i> .	Mitigation is not required.	The impact would be beneficial without mitigation.
Impact AQ-2 Implementation of the proposed Single-Use Carryout Bag Ordinance would generate air pollutant emissions associated with an incremental increase in truck trips to deliver paper and reusable carryout bags to local retailers. However, emissions would not exceed SCAQMD operational significance thresholds. Therefore, operational air quality impacts would be Class III, <i>less than significant</i> .	Mitigation is not required.	Impacts would be less than significant without mitigation.
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES		
Impact BIO-1 The proposed Single-Use Carryout Bag Ordinance would incrementally increase the number of paper and reusable bags within Huntington Beach. However, the reduction in the amount of single-use plastic bags would be expected to incrementally reduce the amount of	Mitigation is not required.	The impact would be beneficial without mitigation.



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litter entering coastal and marine habitats, thus reducing litter-related impacts to sensitive species, plant communities, and coastal wetland areas. This is a Class IV, <i>beneficial</i> , effect.		
GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS		
Impact GHG-1 The proposed Single-Use Carryout Bag Ordinance would reduce the number of single-use carryout bags used in Huntington Beach and promote reusable bags, which are intended to be used multiple times. Implementation of the proposed Ordinance would incrementally increase GHG emissions compared to existing conditions. However, emissions would not exceed recommended SCAQMD thresholds and would not conflict with any applicable plan, policy or regulation of an agency adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases. Impacts would be Class III, <i>less than significant</i> .	Mitigation is not required.	The impact would be less than significant without mitigation.
HYDROLOGY/WATER QUALITY		
Impact HWQ-1 Although the proposed Single-Use Carryout Bag Ordinance would incrementally increase the number of single-use paper and reusable bags used in Huntington Beach, the overall reduction in the total amount of carryout bags would incrementally reduce the amount of litter and waste entering storm drains, water ways and receiving waters such as the Pacific Ocean, improving water quality. This would be a Class IV, <i>beneficial</i> , effect.	Mitigation is not required.	The impact would be beneficial without mitigation.
Impact HWQ-2 A shift toward reusable bags could potentially alter processing activities related to bag production, which could potentially degrade water quality in some instances and locations. However, bag manufacturers would be required to adhere to existing regulations including NPDES Permit requirements, AB 258 and the California Health and Safety Code. Therefore, impacts to water quality	Mitigation is not required.	Impacts would be less than significant without mitigation.



Table ES-1
Summary of Significant Environmental Impacts,
Mitigation Measures, and Residual Impacts

Impact	Mitigation Measures	Significance After Mitigation
from altering bag processing activities would be Class III, <i>less than significant</i> .		

