



March 15, 2022

CALPIRG

Members
 California State Assembly
 State Capitol
 Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Support for Assembly Bill 2026(Friedman): Plastic Film in E-Commerce

Dear Assemblymembers,

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we strongly support Assembly Bill 2026, which will help address the global plastics crisis by phasing out unnecessary and unacceptable single-use plastics used to ship online purchases in and into California.

Thirty-three billion pounds of plastic enter the world’s marine environments every year (1), devastating our shared ocean and coastal ecosystems. Most plastic does not go away, instead it breaks up into smaller pieces that can starve or choke wildlife and continue to release harmful greenhouse gases. Plastics pose risks to human health and our quality of life as Californians, significantly contribute to climate change throughout their lifecycle, and cost California

communities \$420 million (2) each year to clean up and prevent from entering our oceans and waterways.

Plastic mailing envelopes, air pillows, bubble wrap, and expanded polystyrene (including loose fill — commonly referred to as packaging peanuts — and molded foam) added to online purchases during shipment are a substantial contributor to the crisis. In 2020 e-commerce purchases generated nearly 2.9 billion pounds of plastic worldwide — 601.3 million pounds in the United States alone (3) and in 2020, consumers spent \$861 billion online with U.S. merchants, up 44% over 2019. (4) About one-third of the world's population is buying online, and plastic packaging from e-commerce is estimated to more than double by 2026. (5)

While the types of plastic packaging used in the e-commerce marketplace are made from a material designed to last for generations, almost all the packaging is discarded immediately after a package is opened and is neither reused nor recycled. This plastic instead becomes landfilled, burned, or enters our environment, where it can persist as a pollutant for generations.

AB 2026 will require a shift to non-plastic packaging that is recyclable, compostable, or reusable and accepted in curbside bins. This is possible because it is already being done in other countries and practical packaging alternatives are already used here in California. Consumers have expressed concerns with the plastic packaging their orders are shipped in and want plastic-free choices. As worldwide e-commerce continues to increase in volume, it is essential that the state establish provisions ensuring packages sent in and into the state are packaged sustainably and responsibly.

While California represents 12% of the U.S. population (6), we currently represent 27% of the country's total plastic waste exports. (7) Without bold actions, the plastics crisis, and subsequent harmful impacts, will only worsen. As an environmental leader and one of the world's largest economies, California has the opportunity and the responsibility to tackle this pressing issue.

We strongly urge you to vote AYE on AB 2026.

Sincerely,

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Endnotes

- (1) van Sebille, E., Wilcox, C., Lebreton, L., et al. (2015) A global inventory of small floating plastic debris. Environmental Research Letters.
- (2) Kier Associates (2013) Waste in Our Water: The Annual Cost to California Communities of Reducing Litter That Pollutes Our Waterways. Natural Resources Defense Council. 56p.
- (3) Amazon's Plastic Problem Revealed. Oceana. December 15, 2020. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.4341751
[amazons_plastic_problem_report_12.17.2020_doi.pdf](#) (oceana.org)
- (4) Digital Commerce 360. US ecommerce grows 44.0% in 2020. Jan 29, 2021.
<https://www.digitalcommerce360.com/article/us-ecommerce-sales>
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https://oceana.org/sites/default/files/amazons_plastic_problem_report_12.17.2020_doi.pdf
- (6) United States Census Bureau. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/CA>
- (7) Law, K. et al. Science Advances. The United States' contribution of plastic waste to land and ocean. Oct 30, 2020. Vol. 6, no. 44, eabdo288. DOI: 10.1126/sciadv.abd0288 <https://advances.sciencemag.org/content/6/44/eabdo288>