



April 8, 2021

The Honorable Luz Rivas
 Chair, Assembly Natural Resources Committee
 State Capitol
 Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Support for Assembly Bill 1371 (Friedman): Plastic Film in E-Commerce

Dear Chair Rivas,

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we write in strong support of Assembly Bill 1371. Assemblymember Friedman’s legislation will help address the global plastics crisis by phasing out the unnecessary and unacceptable amount of single-use plastic 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. 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 2019 e-commerce purchases generated nearly 2.1 billion pounds of plastic worldwide — 469 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) 4 About one-third of the world's population is buying online, and plastic packaging from e-commerce is estimated to double by 2025. (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 1371 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. 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. Additionally, consumers have expressed concerns with the plastic packaging their orders are shipped in and want plastic-free choices.

AB 1371 also requires that while single-use plastic packaging is being phased out, online retailers with at least one physical storefront in the state, or lockers for the secure pickup of purchased products, take back plastic film packaging and recycle or re-use that material. AB 1371 also extends the sunset on an existing requirement that establishments that provide carry out and/or durable plastics bags provide a collection bin for the purposes of collecting and recycling those bags.

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 your support for AB 1371.

Sincerely,

Daniel Chandler
Steering Committee/Leg Committee Chair
350 Humboldt

Anna Cummins
Co-Founder and Deputy Director
The 5 Gyres Institute

Susan Stephenson
Executive Director
California Interfaith Power & Light

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Wishtoyo Chumash Foundation

Ruth Abbe
President
Zero Waste USA

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- (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
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- (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.abdo288
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