



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## RIDLEY-THOMAS APPLAUDES INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCE BANNING PLASTIC BAGS

### *LA County Becomes Nation's Largest Municipality to Take Step*

**Los Angeles**—The Board of Supervisors today introduced an ordinance banning the sale of single-use plastic bags in Los Angeles County's unincorporated areas. The County becomes the country's largest government entity to enact such bold environmental legislation.

"With this vote, Los Angeles County becomes a national leader in the movement to promote the use of reusable bags," said Supervisor Ridley-Thomas. "Single-use plastic bags take a significant toll on our environment and infrastructure. The vast majority of plastic bags ultimately end up clogging our storm drains, threatening our local waters and wildlife, and become blight within our communities."

The new ordinance will ban plastic carryout bags and impose a ten-cent charge for paper bags at all supermarkets, grocery stores, pharmacies, convenience stores and food marts. Retailers, such as supermarkets and large pharmacies, must stop offering single-use plastic bags by July 1, 2011 or face enforcement action; smaller retailers will have until January 1, 2012 to comply.

“We spend \$18 Million a year to clean up and prevent litter in Los Angeles County,” said Supervisor Ridley-Thomas. “This bold measure is an economically and environmentally sustainable alternative to such a wasteful habit.”

In 2008, the Board set reduction goals for plastic bags distribution: 30% reduction by 2010 and 65% reduction by 2013. However, when the initial benchmark was not reached, the Board directed staff to finalize a motion to ban the free distribution of plastic bags throughout the unincorporated areas of the County. Supervisor Ridley-Thomas supported statewide legislation, AB 1998, to ban single-use plastic bags throughout California. When that effort failed, he joined environmental and community advocates in pursuing a local ban.

Supervisor Ridley-Thomas also introduced a motion to ensure that reusable bags not contain levels of lead, cadmium or heavy metals in toxic amounts, as defined by applicable State and Federal standards and regulations, consistent with his legislative history advocating for the reduction of lead in the environment because of its irreversible negative effects on the population, particularly children.

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