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## Council Balks at Supporting Bag Ban

*By Sophie Braccini*

The Moraga Town Council took a cautious approach to a statewide ban on plastic bags. The state senate will soon consider legislation that would ban loose plastic bags in large retail stores by 2015 and in small ones by 2016. The council considered and rejected the idea of sending a letter supporting the ban, at least until local businesses have a chance to weigh in.

The discussion began with Mayor Dave Trotter and Council Member Mike Metcalf speaking in support of a statewide bag ban. Trotter said he was not interested in local legislation to ban plastic bags in Moraga, but that it made sense at the state level. "Plastic bags don't add mass to the landfill, recycling them is costly and recyclers do not get much diversion credit for them, so the best way to protect the environment is a statewide ban," said Trotter.

"Tim Argenti from Allied Waste came to a Kiwanis meeting recently and explained to us what a nightmare plastic bags are because they get entangled in recycling machines," added Metcalf in support of banning bags rather than recycling them.

But the support stopped there. Vice Mayor Ken Chew said there were more important pollutants than plastic bags, such as plastic bottles, and machines could be modified to accommodate plastic bags.

"We discussed this on the town's Climate Action Task Force," added Council Member Roger Wykle. "Four voted for it, one opposed and two abstained; I was one of them." He thinks that Moraga's business owners should be consulted before the council makes a decision on this issue. Council Member Phil Arth agreed and proposed to reach out to the Chamber of Commerce.

Bill Durkin of Sustainable Moraga commented after the meeting that he was disappointed in the decision. "I can't understand why the town council does not want Moraga to take any kind of leadership role in being earth-friendly in any way," he said. "They will only do something if required, and then do so kicking and screaming." Back in 2007, Sustainable Moraga launched a reusable bag campaign, selling green bags in front of Safeway. "It is nice to see that most businesses now offer (sell) reusable shopping bags," he said, "but we are a very long way from making a dent in plastic bag use."

For more information on the pending legislation go to the California Legislative information site at [leginfo.legislature.ca.gov](http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov) and search for SB-405.

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