

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEDIA CONTACT:

Tiffany Martinez

Departmental Communications Officer

tiffany.martinez@santacruzcountyca.gov



**NEW CALIFORNIA LAW BANNING SINGLE-USE PLASTIC CARRYOUT BAGS
NOW IN EFFECT STATEWIDE**

1/8/2026 – Santa Cruz, CA – The County of Santa Cruz Department of Community Development & Infrastructure (CDI) informs residents and businesses that a new California state law (AB 1053) changes the type of carryout bags that can be provided to customers is now in effect statewide. The law is intended to reduce plastic waste, encourage use of reusable bags, and support long-standing local efforts to protect beaches, waterways, and neighborhoods.

Under state law, stores may no longer provide single-use plastic carryout bags to customers. Recyclable paper carryout bags may still be offered, but for a fee. In Unincorporated Santa Cruz County, the required paper bag fee is \$0.25 per bag.

“Small changes in everyday habits add up to meaningful environmental benefits,” said Christina Horvat, CDI’s zero waste program coordinator. “Bringing a reusable bag is one of the simplest ways residents can help reduce waste and keep our community clean.”

Santa Cruz County has long been a leader in waste reduction and environmental protection. This statewide update builds on local policies designed to reduce single-use materials and keep litter out of the environment and is also working to support local businesses as they implement the new requirements by providing clear guidance on acceptable bag types, signage requirements, and applicable fees.

For more information about the statewide bag law or local Zero Waste programs, community members and businesses can contact the County’s Zero Waste team at zerowaste@santacruzcountyca.gov.

ABOUT THE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE

CDI serves all unincorporated areas in the county. The department’s mission is to improve customer service, streamline projects, and to align public infrastructure and private development to further County goals in attainable housing, reliable transportation and sustainable environment. For more information, visit <https://cdi.santacruzcountyca.gov/> or follow the department on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [X](#) and [Nextdoor](#).

###