

Open Letter To California State Senators & Assembly Members

With the end of the current legislative session in sight, the [Responsible Recycling Alliance \(RRA\)](#), a coalition of three prominent California recyclers and manufacturers – EFS Plastics, Merlin Plastics, and PreZero US, which was formed to help California reduce, reuse, and recycle plastic film waste across the state through effective education and legislation – today shared its recommendation for the best path forward to ensure sustainable plastic film recycling in California.

As the process to amend AB 2236 (Bauer-Kahan) and SB 1053 (Blakespear) has accelerated, so too have the gaps that exist in these bills. While they were originally intended to guide California into the future, the fact is that as currently drafted, they take a giant vault backward. Chief among these concerns are that the bills would:

- Eliminate the reusable plastic film grocery bags that millions of Californians use – and reuse – every day.
- Result in a higher carbon footprint across the state by forcing Californians to choose from two options – canvas and sewn poly-woven or non-woven polypropylene bags or paper bags – both of which carry with them a series of challenges.
- Confuse canvas and sewn poly-woven or non-woven polypropylene bags that are not recyclable by any known method in the U.S. and contain zero certified post-consumer recycled content with plastic film grocery bags that are completely recyclable.
- Obscure the fact that paper bags consume more water and energy during their production and recycling than reusable plastic film grocery bags when reused.
- Hurt Californians that can least afford the added cost of what would be the mandated bags. Middle- and lower-income Californians are among the most prevalent users of 10 cent plastic bags. In fact, 77% of purchasers have annual incomes of less than \$150,000, and 52% have incomes of less than \$80,000.

Fortunately, a sustainable solution is readily available that will:

- Shift the responsibility to the plastics industry for recycling reusable plastic film grocery bags by integrating them into the Plastic Pollution Prevention and Packaging Producer Responsibility Program created in 2022 by SB 54.
- Make the enormous amount of plastic film and packaging used to keep food fresh and safe a key part of the ultimate circularity solution.
- Ensure that tons of this material stay out of landfills and instead provide the volume of plastic film necessary to make circular recycling a reality.
- Heed the need of Californians – almost 60% of whom favor taking a better and more productive approach to sustainable recycling than what the current bills envision – and work with consumers, grocers, as well as the plastic film manufacturers and recyclers to develop the right, long-term solution that can be introduced next year.

Together, we can develop and enact a lasting solution that protects the environment, grocers and consumers at the same time. It can be done. We at the RRA are eager to be a part of this solution.

The Responsible Recycling Alliance