

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 521

Introduced by Assembly Members Hueso and Stone

February 20, 2013

An act relating to solid waste.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 521, as introduced, Hueso. Solid waste: plastic.

The California Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989, administered by the Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery, requires every rigid plastic packaging container, as defined, sold or offered for sale in this state to generally meet one of specified criteria.

This bill would declare the intention of the Legislature to enact legislation that would create the Plastic Pollution Reduction Producer Responsibility Act to significantly reduce plastic pollution in the marine environment and require producers of those products to be financially responsible for this reduction.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: no.
State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

- 1 SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the
- 2 following:
- 3 (a) The health of California's ocean and coastline is increasingly
- 4 threatened by the persistent influx of plastic pollution on our shores
- 5 and into our ocean. Plastic marine pollution is hurting California's
- 6 environment and economy.

1 (b) The vast majority of litter in California’s coast and ocean
2 comes from land-based sources, and it is well documented from
3 more than 25 years of coastal cleanup data that up to 80 percent
4 of this litter is plastic.

5 (c) A 2012 study by the Convention on Biological Diversity
6 found that 663 marine species have been impacted by marine litter
7 through entanglement and ingestion, which is a two-thirds increase
8 in species from a similar study in 1998.

9 (d) In 2012, Region 9 of the federal Environmental Protection
10 Agency estimated California’s coastal cities and counties spend
11 more than four hundred eighteen million dollars (\$418,000,000)
12 each year to combat litter and curtail marine debris.

13 (e) The global production and consumption of plastic, especially
14 single use plastic products, is on the rise.

15 (f) Existing federal and state laws designed to combat marine
16 litter are failing to keep plastic pollution from entering the ocean
17 and harming marine wildlife and coastal economies.

18 (g) Of the many plastic materials that pollute the ocean,
19 single-use plastic items are some of the worst offenders. While
20 used briefly on land, these items contain plastic that persists
21 indefinitely in the marine environment.

22 (h) A new approach is needed in California to reduce the impacts
23 of single-use plastic products on California’s environment and
24 economy.

25 SEC. 2. It is the intent of the Legislature to enact legislation
26 that would create the Plastic Pollution Reduction Producer
27 Responsibility Act to do all of the following:

28 (a) Protect California’s coasts and oceans by significantly
29 reducing plastic pollution in the marine environment and requiring
30 producers of those products to be financially responsible for the
31 reduction.

32 (b) Reduce the financial burden on local governments, taxpayers,
33 and California regional water quality control boards in
34 implementing key marine plastic pollution prevention infrastructure
35 and activities.

36 (c) Support California’s economy by shifting the financial
37 burden to those responsible for marine plastic pollution and by
38 providing resources for local infrastructure projects.

39 (d) Conduct ongoing monitoring to show measurable reduction
40 of plastic pollution in the marine environment and to better

- 1 understand the sources, pathways, and impacts of marine plastic
- 2 pollution.

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