

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY JUNE 22, 2010

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY JUNE 15, 2010

AMENDED IN SENATE APRIL 26, 2010

AMENDED IN SENATE MARCH 25, 2010

SENATE BILL

No. 1454

Introduced by Senator DeSaulnier

February 19, 2010

An act to repeal Chapter 5.8 (commencing with Section 42359) of, and to repeal and add Chapter 5.7 (commencing with Section 42355) of, Part 3 of Division 30 of the Public Resources Code, relating to recycling.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 1454, as amended, DeSaulnier. Recycling: plastic products.

Existing law prohibits a person from selling a plastic bag or a plastic food or beverage container that is labeled as “compostable” or “marine degradable” unless that plastic bag or container meets certain American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) standard specifications or a standard adopted by the Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery. Existing law prohibits the sale of a plastic bag or plastic food or beverage container that is labeled as “biodegradable,” “degradable,” “decomposable,” or as otherwise specified. Existing law provides for the imposition of a civil penalty for a violation of these prohibitions.

This bill would repeal those prohibitions and would instead prohibit the sale of a plastic product, as defined, labeled as “compostable” or “marine degradable” unless it meets those ASTM standard specifications or a standard adopted by the department, *or unless the plastic product is labeled with a qualified claim for which the department has adopted*

a standard, and the plastic product meets that standard. The bill would prohibit the sale of a plastic product that is labeled as “biodegradable,” “degradable,” “decomposable,” or as otherwise specified. The bill would provide for the imposition of a civil penalty for a violation of those prohibitions.

The bill would state legislative findings and declarations regarding plastic litter.

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

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

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 5.7 (commencing with Section 42355)
2 of Part 3 of Division 30 of the Public Resources Code is repealed.
3 SEC. 2. Chapter 5.7 (commencing with Section 42355) is added
4 to Part 3 of Division 30 of the Public Resources Code, to read:

5
6 CHAPTER 5.7. PLASTIC PRODUCTS
7

8 42355. The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

9 (a) Littered plastic products have caused and continue to cause
10 significant environmental harm and have burdened local
11 governments with significant environmental cleanup costs.

12 (b) It is the intent of the Legislature to ensure that environmental
13 marketing claims, including claims of biodegradation, do not lead
14 to an increase in environmental harm associated with plastic litter
15 by providing consumers with a false belief that certain plastic
16 products are less harmful to the environment if littered.

17 (c) A product’s ability to biodegrade is a function of both the
18 physical and chemical makeup of the product as well as the
19 environmental conditions to which it is subject.

20 (d) Use of the term “degradable,” “biodegradable,”
21 “decomposable,” or other like terms on plastic products is
22 inherently misleading unless the claim includes a thorough
23 disclaimer providing necessary qualifying details, including, but
24 not limited to, the environments and timeframes in which the
25 claimed action will take place.

26 (e) Given the complex nature of biodegradation and the fact
27 that most plastic products will travel through multiple environments
28 from the time of manufacture to the time of final disposition, and

1 given the intrinsic constraints of marketing claims, including the
2 space on the plastic product, there is no reasonable ability for
3 plastic product manufacturers to provide an adequate disclaimer
4 qualifying the use of these and like terms without relying on an
5 established scientific standard specification for the action claimed.

6 (f) Given these and other constraints, and the significant
7 environmental harm that is caused by plastic litter, the use of these
8 terms must be prohibited unless, or until the time as there is
9 established, an American Society for Testing and Materials
10 (ASTM) ~~Standard Specification~~ *standard specification* for the term
11 claimed that has been approved by the Legislature.

12 42355.5. The Legislature finds and declares that it is the public
13 policy of the state that environmental marketing claims, whether
14 explicit or implied, should be substantiated by competent and
15 reliable evidence to prevent deceiving or misleading consumers
16 about the environmental impact of plastic products. For consumers
17 to have accurate and useful information about the environmental
18 impact of plastic products, environmental marketing claims should
19 adhere to uniform and recognized standards, including those
20 standard specifications established by the American Society for
21 Testing and Materials.

22 42356. For purposes of this chapter, the following definitions
23 apply:

24 (a) “ASTM” means the American Society for Testing and
25 Materials.

26 (b) (1) “ASTM standard specification” means one of the
27 following:

28 (A) The ASTM Standard Specification for Compostable Plastics
29 D6400, as published in September 2004, except as provided in
30 subdivision (c) of Section 42356.1.

31 (B) The ASTM Standard Specification for Non-Floating
32 Biodegradable Plastics in the Marine Environment D7081, as
33 published in August 2005, except as provided in subdivision (c)
34 of Section 42356.1.

35 (C) The ASTM Standard Specification for Biodegradable
36 Plastics Used as Coatings on Paper and Other Compostable
37 Substrates D6868, as published in August 2003, except as specified
38 in subdivision (c) of Section 42356.1.

39 (2) “ASTM standard specification” does not include an ASTM
40 Standard Guide, a Standard Practice, or a Standard Test Method.

1 (c) “Department” means the Department of Resources Recycling
2 and Recovery.

3 (d) “Manufacturer” means a person, firm, association,
4 partnership, or corporation that produces a plastic product.

5 (e) “Plastic product” means a product made of plastic, whether
6 alone or in combination with other material, including, but not
7 limited to, paperboard. A plastic product includes, but is not limited
8 to, any of the following:

9 (1) (A) A consumer product.

10 (B) For purposes of this paragraph, “consumer product” means
11 a product or part of a product that is used, bought, or leased for
12 use by a person for any purpose.

13 (2) A package or a packaging component.

14 (3) A bag, sack, wrap, or other thin plastic sheet film product.

15 (4) A food or beverage container or a container component,
16 including, but not limited to, a straw, lid, or utensil.

17 (f) “Supplier” means a person who does one or more of the
18 following:

19 (1) Sells, offers for sale, or offers for promotional purposes, a
20 plastic product that is used.

21 (2) Takes title to a plastic product, produced either domestically
22 or in a foreign country, that is purchased for resale or promotional
23 purposes.

24 42356.1. (a) If an ASTM standard specification specified in
25 paragraph (1) of subdivision (b) of Section 42356 is subsequently
26 revised, the department shall review the new ASTM standard
27 specification as follows:

28 (1) If the department determines that the new standard is more
29 stringent and more protective of the public health, safety, and the
30 environment, and is reflective of and consistent with state policies
31 and programs, the department may adopt the new standard.

32 (2) If the department determines that the new standard is not as
33 stringent and does not protect the public health, safety, and the
34 environment, and is not reflective of and consistent with state
35 policies and programs, the department shall not adopt the new
36 standard.

37 (b) If the ASTM, or any other entity, develops a new standard
38 specification or other applicable standard for any of the terms
39 prohibited under subdivision (a) of Section 42357, the department
40 may review the new standard and, if the department determines

1 that the new standard for the prohibited term is more stringent and
2 more protective of the public health, safety, and the environment,
3 and is reflective of and consistent with state policies and programs,
4 the department may make a recommendation to the Legislature.

5 (c) Compliance with a standard adopted pursuant to paragraph
6 (1) of subdivision (a) shall be deemed to be in compliance with
7 this chapter.

8 42357. (a) (1) ~~A~~*Except as provided in paragraph (3), a*
9 person shall not sell a plastic product in this state that is labeled
10 with the term “compostable” or “marine degradable” unless, at the
11 time of sale, the plastic product meets the applicable ASTM
12 standard specification, as specified in paragraph (1) of subdivision
13 (b) of Section 42356.

14 (2) Compliance with only a section or a portion of a section of
15 an applicable ASTM standard specification does not constitute
16 compliance with paragraph (1).

17 (3) *Notwithstanding paragraph (1), a person may sell a plastic*
18 *product in this state that is labeled with a qualified claim for a*
19 *term specified in paragraph (1), including, but not limited to, the*
20 *claim “home compostable,” if the department adopts a standard*
21 *for that qualified claim that is more stringent than the ASTM*
22 *standard specification for the term specified in paragraph (1), and*
23 *if the plastic product meets the standard adopted by the department*
24 *for that qualified claim.*

25 (b) Except as provided in subdivision (a), a person shall not sell
26 a plastic product in this state that is labeled with the term
27 “biodegradable,” “degradable,” or “decomposable,” or any form
28 of those terms, or in any way imply that the plastic product will
29 break down, fragment, biodegrade, or decompose in a landfill or
30 other environment.

31 (c) A manufacturer or supplier, upon the request of a member
32 of the public, shall submit to that member, within 90 days of the
33 request, information and documentation demonstrating compliance
34 with this chapter, in a format that is easy to understand and
35 scientifically accurate.

36 42358. (a) A city, a county, or the state may impose civil
37 liability in the amount of five hundred dollars (\$500) for the first
38 violation of this chapter, one thousand dollars (\$1,000) for the
39 second violation, and two thousand dollars (\$2,000) for the third
40 and any subsequent violation.

1 (b) Any civil penalties collected pursuant to subdivision (a)
2 shall be paid to the office of the city attorney, city prosecutor,
3 district attorney, or Attorney General, whichever office brought
4 the action. The penalties collected pursuant to this section by the
5 Attorney General may be expended by the Attorney General, upon
6 appropriation by the Legislature, to enforce this chapter.

7 (c) The remedies provided by this section are not exclusive and
8 are in addition to the remedies that may be available pursuant to
9 Sections 17200 to 17210, inclusive, of the Business and Professions
10 Code.

11 (d) Any costs incurred by a state agency in carrying out this
12 chapter shall be recoverable by the Attorney General, upon the
13 request of the agency, from the liable person or persons.

14 SEC. 3. Chapter 5.8 (commencing with Section 42359) of Part
15 3 of Division 30 of the Public Resources Code is repealed.