

# **Reusable Bag Laws in California**

Over the last decade, Alameda County and the State of California have progressively tightened laws on plastic bag use, aiming to curb pollution, encourage sustainable practices, and reduce waste. These measures have notably decreased plastic bag consumption and helped protect our environment. However, due to a variety of factors, we're seeing an increase in the number of plastic bags being distributed and a decrease in customers bringing their own. New policy is on the horizon in an attempt to reduce overall bag usage.

# Alameda County Reusable Bag Ordinance Alameda County adopts the Reusable Bag Ordinance

Alameda County adopts the Reusable Bag Ordinance, banning flimsy plastic bags at point of sale for around 1,500 grocery, drug, pharmacy, convenience, and liquor stores. The ordinance also requires stores to charge 10 cents for compliant thick reusable plastic and paper bags.



10-cent charge for reusable plastic and paper bags



No more single-use plastic bags

#### California SB 270

2014

2016

2024

This state law (implemented in 2016), bans flimsy plastic bags statewide. It affects the same entities as the Alameda County ordinance, and also requires a 10-cent charge for compliant reusable plastic bags and paper bags. The law also stipulates that for plastic bags to be considered compliant, the bags must have a minimum of 40% recycled content, be recyclable in California, and be labeled as "recyclable."



## Reusable Bag Ordinance Expansion

Alameda County expands its ordinance to 14,000 retail stores including food establishments. The expansion requires restaurants to charge 10 cents for compliant plastic bags but allows them to offer paper bags for free.



2021 — California SB 1046 bans plastic pre-checkout bags at all stores; compostable plastic and paper bags allowed for free.

Law takes effect in 2025.

## 2022 Berkeley Bag Law

The City of Berkeley passes a law that bans any plastic bags regardless of thickness at stores not covered by the state law. Plastic bags are banned for restaurants as well, except those given on-site for leftovers. Paper bags are free at restaurants only. Berkeley's law also sets new pre-checkout bag requirements, including a 10-cent charge for plastic bags, and no charge for recycled paper and "accepted" compostable produce bags, until SB 1046 becomes effective in 2025.



No plastic bags allowed at stores not covered under the state law

#### State Bag Law Changes on the Horizon

California legislature introduces new bills to amend SB 270 in an effort to ban single-use film plastic shopping bag statewide. The bills would remove the option to have any kind of film plastic bags at stores affected by SB 270. The draft bills would require stores to only offer 100 percent recycled paper bags for a charge of 10 cents.