

San Jose becomes largest U.S. city to ban plastic bags

By John Woolfolk, San Jose Mercury News

San Jose became the largest U.S. city to ban plastic carry-out bags Tuesday with an ordinance that supporters said was the most far-reaching in the country aimed at encouraging shoppers to bring reusable totes.

The ordinance, approved on a 10-1 vote after two years of study, wouldn't become effective until Jan. 1, 2012, to allow for more public outreach. It would prohibit retailers from giving out disposable plastic bags at the check stand and require them to charge for paper bags.

"This is a great step," Councilman Sam Liccardo said. "It's an opportunity to lead on an important environmental issue."

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