

# AG goes after questionable 'biodegradable plastic' bottles

By Paul Rogers, San Jose Mercury News

In a move that could have a major impact on the recycling industry, California Attorney General Kamala Harris will sue three national companies that make plastic bottles or sell bottled water in California, contending that they illegally claim their bottles are "biodegradable."

The lawsuit filed Wednesday, seeks to have tens of thousands of bottles of Aquamantra and Balance Water removed from supermarket shelves immediately. It asserts that the bottles used by those brands do not actually decompose naturally and that they contaminate other types of recycled plastic. Further, the suit states that their green-sounding labels could lead to increased littering if consumers believe that tossed bottles will decompose like apple cores or banana peels.

"The manufacturers of these bottles are taking advantage of Californians' concern for their environment," Harris said. "Consumers are led to believe they are being environmentally friendly by choosing these bottles. In fact, they could be further damaging our natural resources."

The court action, filed in Orange County Superior Court, names ENSO Plastics, a bottle-maker based in Mesa, Ariz., along with the retail companies that sell bottled water: Aquamantra, of Dana Point, and Balance Water, of West Orange, N.J.

The products of all three companies are found in stores across California and other states, including major grocery chains such as Whole Foods and Albertson's.

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