

# Plastic bags remain legal in California

By Laurel Rosenhall, Sacramento Bee

A proposal to ban plastic grocery bags in California went the way of so many plastic bags – into the trash can – on Thursday when it failed to garner enough votes in the state Senate to move ahead in the lawmaking process.

Senate Bill 405 by Sen. Alex Padilla, D-Pacoima, would have prohibited supermarkets and drugstores from providing plastic shopping bags to consumers beginning in 2015. Paper bags would be available for purchase. Padilla argued that the ban would be good for the environment, reduce litter and help local governments that now deal with cleaning them up. Many senators said the bill would promote good habits among Californians, who would get used to carrying their own reusable shopping bags.

But several of Padilla's Democratic colleagues opposed the measure, saying it would cut jobs for constituents who work in Los Angeles-area bag factories and would hurt consumers who re-use their plastic bags for garbage, dog waste and other household needs. Republicans also opposed it, saying the Legislature had more important things to work on.

"I think there is an education campaign necessary," Padilla said after the final 18-17 vote on his bill.

Four senators did not vote – Democrats Ben Hueso, Curren Price, Lois Wolk and Rod Wright. Padilla said he hopes to persuade them to vote for his bill and wants to move it from the Senate's trash can to its recycling bin, so it can get another vote next year.