

Opinion: Will California ban plastic bags?

By Dan Walters, Sacramento Bee

When Capitol insiders talk about a “bag bill,” it refers to something for which an interest group is willing to spend big money – legally, it’s presumed – to see done.

Senate Bill 270, one might say, is a double bag bill.



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It would phase out, beginning in 2015, the single-use plastic bags that grocery stores commonly use to send purchases home. It also involves big money and big interest groups.

Banning plastic bags is a burning cause for some environmentalists, contending that they squander energy, add to solid-waste-disposal problems, and often pollute waterways and the ocean, where they pose dangers to wildlife.

Sen. Alex Padilla, D-Los Angeles, the author of SB270, says the billions of bags used annually in California “cost state and local governments at least \$25 million,” and dozens of the state’s more liberal cities have already banned them.

Previous efforts to enact a statewide ban failed, but this year the powerful grocery industry signed on, saying that a statewide policy makes more sense than a patchwork and enticed by new authority for grocers to charge 10 cents (or more) for

every bag – paper or reusable plastic – they provide.

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