

Backers: Plastic bag ban referendum has enough signatures

By Jeremy B. White, Sacramento Bee

Extending the fight over California's ban on single-use plastic bags, manufacturers and other opponents of the law on Monday submitted what they said were enough signatures for a referendum that would dispose of the ban before it can take effect.

Numerous cities, like South Lake Tahoe, and counties in California prohibit or charge for single-use plastic bags, and a bid to extend the policy statewide fueled one of the fiercest fights of the 2014 legislative session. Soon after Gov. Jerry Brown signed Senate Bill 270, an industry-backed organization called the American Progressive Bag Alliance announced the referendum drive.

Working under a narrow 90-day window – referendums have less time to qualify than other ballot initiatives – referendum backers said they had accumulated more than 800,000 signatures, many more than the 504,760 needed to qualify. Some of those signatures could be invalid, however, and now counties must conduct random samples to determine if enough of them are legitimate.

“We are pleased to have reached this important milestone in the effort to repeal a terrible piece of job-killing legislation and look forward to giving California voters a chance to make their voice heard at the ballot box in 2016,” American Progressive Bag Alliance executive director Lee Califf said in a statement.

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