

Assembly bills propose to reduce ocean litter

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A group of lawmakers proposed Wednesday to reduce litter in oceans by banning Styrofoam containers for take-out food, charging 25 cents for plastic or paper grocery bags and banning detachable bottle caps.

Members of the state Assembly's Coastal Caucus, who proposed the bills, said reducing ocean pollution would protect the environment and save tax dollars.

"Taxpayers are already spending in the neighborhood of \$275 million a year on garbage clean-up that these bills will address," said Assemblyman Pedro Nava, D-Santa Barbara. "We need to take the long, bigger-picture approach and recognize that there are savings to be made here so that cities and counties can use those monies picking up trash for other programs that benefit residents."

The bills:

-- AB1358 by Nava and Assemblyman Jerry Hill, D-San Mateo, would ban Styrofoam containers for take-out food.

-- AB68 by Assemblywoman Julia Brownley, D-Santa Monica, would require shoppers to pay a 25-cent fee at the grocery store checkout stand for using paper or plastic bags. The money would fund programs encouraging the use of reusable bags. (Shoppers with food stamps or WIC would be exempt.)

-- AB925 by Assemblywoman Lori Saldana, D-San Diego, would require beverage makers to use bottle caps that are attached to the container.

-- AB283 by Assemblyman Wes Chesbro, D-Arcata (Humboldt County), would require manufacturers to explain how their products can be recycled.

<http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2009/03/05/BALT169FFC.DTL>

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