

Fort Bragg, Calif., bans plastic bags

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PLASTICS NEWS STAFF

FORT BRAGG, CALIF. (May 18, 1:50 p.m. ET) -- Fort Bragg, a city of 7,300 along the coast of California halfway between San Francisco and Redwoods National Park, has become the second city in Mendocino County to ban single-use plastic bags and charge 10 cents for paper bags.

That brings the number of communities in the United States with a plastic bag ban to 75 — two-thirds of them in California. Two other communities -- Washington, D.C., and Montgomery County, Md. -- have fees on plastic bags handed out at carryout.

The Fort Bragg ban, approved unanimously May 14 by the board of supervisors, is scheduled to go into effect Dec. 10 for retail stores with sales of more than \$3 million and also for stores with more than 10,000 square feet that also have a pharmacy.

There is an exception from the ban for take-out food provided by restaurants, and for vendors at farmers' markets. In addition, smaller stores will not have to comply until mid-December 2013.

The ban also does not apply to dry cleaner, clothes hanger or newspaper bags or to plastic bags used for bulk foods, produce and to package frozen foods, meats, poultry and fish, bakery goods. Stores can also provide customer plastic bags for flowers, potted plants or items where dampness is a potential issue.

Under the law, stores must also charge customers at least 10 cents for each paper bag it provides to customers at checkout, and those paper bags must contain at least 40 percent post-consumer recycled content.

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