



345 Lake Avenue, Suite A, Santa Cruz, CA 95062  
831.462.5660 - [www.saveourshores.org](http://www.saveourshores.org)



99 Pacific Street, Suite 155C  
Monterey, CA 93940

831.643.9266  
[www.oceana.org](http://www.oceana.org)

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:  
Colleen Bednarz  
831.462.5660 ext.2  
[media@saveourshores.org](mailto:media@saveourshores.org)

### Sanctuary Advisory Council Unanimously Approves Historic Resolution to Ban Plastic Bags

(April 27, 2011) Santa Cruz, CA – The [Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary's](#) (MBNMS) [Sanctuary Advisory Council](#) (SAC) last week unanimously approved a resolution to support citywide, countywide, statewide, and even national bans on single-use plastic bags to decrease the threats that plastic bags pose for marine species and ocean habitats. This historic resolution marks the first such statement by a Sanctuary Advisory Council in the nation, with members representing business, recreation, fishing, tourism, agriculture, scientists, and conservation interests.

Says Dr. Geoff Shester of Oceana, the conservation representative on the SAC who authored the resolution, "Unanimous approval of this Resolution from such a broad group of stakeholders sends a strong message to decision-makers and legislators that plastic bags are a serious and preventable form of ocean pollution. Clearly, reusable bags are readily available and economically viable, so the time is now for our state legislators and regional leaders around the Sanctuary to take action."

"Many marine animals are susceptible to impacts from litter and other types of pollution, and several organizations have documented the negative effects that ocean pollution can wield upon our marine environment. I commend the Sanctuary Advisory Council's Resolution to support bans on single-use plastic bags. I appreciate everyone's support in taking this step to improve the health our oceans, and to protect the waters of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary," says Paul Michel, Superintendent of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary.

The Resolution recognizes that plastic bags threaten a variety of marine life including whales, sea otters, pinnipeds, sea turtles, and sea birds through ingestion, choking, infection and/or entanglement. Of particular concern are the endangered Pacific leatherback sea turtle populations that migrate across the Pacific Ocean from Indonesia to feed and mistake plastic bags for jellyfish, their primary food source in the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary.

Lauren Gilligan of Save Our Shores, who sits on the SAC as an alternate to the conservation seat, says, "Save Our Shores has removed over 26,000 plastic bags during beach and river cleanups since the summer of 2007, and has been working on local bans on single-use plastic bags for years now. With the SAC's Resolution on our side, support from the community will only continue to grow, and that's what we need to get these bag bans adopted."

The [Central Coast Sanctuary Alliance](#) (CCSA), recently founded by Save Our Shores, is increasing support for local bans on single-use plastic bags around the Sanctuary through advocacy, outreach, and gathering petition signatures. The CCSA is made up of over 40 organizations and business, including SOS and Oceana, and is asking local businesses to get behind this issue by signing on as a Supporting Business or Supporting Member.

The Resolution also supports the efforts of local businesses to transition away from single-use plastic bags, as well as any efforts to remove plastic bag litter from the shores, rivers, and waters of the MBNMS. The full resolution can be found at <http://montereybay.noaa.gov/sac/sacact.html>.

**About Save Our Shores:**

Save Our Shores is the Central Coast leader in caring for the marine environment through ocean awareness, advocacy and citizen action. Our core initiatives are Plastic Pollution, Clean Boating, and Ocean Awareness. Over the last 30 years, Save Our Shores helped to establish the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, prevent offshore oil drilling and cruise ship pollution, and today focuses on educating youth about our local watersheds, tackling pollution on our beaches and rivers, implementing our renowned DockWalker program, and providing our community with educated and inspired Sanctuary Stewards. For more information visit: [www.saveourshores.org](http://www.saveourshores.org).

**About Oceana:**

Oceana is the largest international advocacy group working solely to protect the world's oceans. Oceana wins policy victories for the oceans using science-based campaigns. Since 2001, we have protected over 1.2 million square miles of ocean and innumerable sea turtles, sharks, dolphins and other sea creatures. More than 500,000 supporters have already joined Oceana. Global in scope, Oceana has offices in North, South and Central America and Europe. To learn more, please visit [www.oceana.org](http://www.oceana.org).

###