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For Immediate Release

Contact:

Phil Bobel
Manager, Environmental Compliance
Division Public Works
650-329-2285

WALGREENS VOLUNTARILY ELIMINATES PLASTIC BAGS

Palo Alto, CA -- Walgreens and the City of Palo Alto have worked together through Palo Alto's Reusable Bag Work Group to reduce plastic bag use and increase the use of reusable bags. To accelerate the process, Walgreens has voluntarily discontinued single-use plastic checkout bags at its three Palo Alto stores. City of Palo Alto officials have expressed their appreciation to Walgreens officials for helping to prevent plastic bag litter from impacting Palo Alto creeks, San Francisco Bay and the ocean. On September 18, 2009, a new Palo Alto Ordinance became effective discontinuing single-use plastic checkout bags at large grocery stores. Walgreens was not required to comply but has taken its action proactively, understanding the goal to reduce plastic litter and encourage reusable bags.

Palo Alto's Environmental Compliance Manager, Phil Bobel, noted that "Because of partnerships with stores like Walgreens, we've been able to increase reusable bag use from 9% in 2008 to 18% in 2009."

Walgreens is encouraging its customers to "Skip the Bag" to save the environment in concert with the "Bring Your Own Bag" (BYOBag) campaign initiated by Palo Alto and other Bay Area communities. Walgreens became the first retailer after the grocers to take this proactive step. Earlier, Whole Foods, Country Sun and Piazza's had eliminated single-use checkout bags well ahead of Palo Alto's compliance date for grocery stores.

Plastic bags break into smaller and smaller pieces over time as they are subjected to the forces of nature, but do not break down chemically for many years, if ever. Scientists have found an alarming build up of plastics in the plankton zone in the oceans in recent years. Even more alarming is the accumulation of plastic in marine animals and birds as they ingest plastic pieces. The City of Palo Alto and Walgreens are working to avoid these effects by encouraging customers to use reusable bags.

More information regarding Palo Alto's Plastic Bag Restrictions can be found on our website:

<http://www.cityofpaloalto.org/environment/news/details.asp?NewsID=1024&TargetID=63>

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