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June 28, 2010

The Honorable Julia Brownley
State Capitol
P.O. Box 942849
Sacramento, CA 94249-0041

Re: AB 1998 [support]

Dear Assemblywoman Brownley:

I write to express SPUR's support for AB 1998. SPUR, the San Francisco Planning and Urban Research Association, is a member-supported nonprofit organization devoted to good planning and good government in San Francisco. We were supporters of the City of San Francisco's plastic bag ban in 2007, and we are encouraged to see this policy potentially extended—and even improved—across the state of California.

We support AB 1998 for three main reasons. First, it will encourage people to use a truly reusable bag instead of a one-time, throwaway product, by allowing retailers to charge a small fee for paper bags. Second, AB 1998 is revenue neutral for state and local governments because its implementation and enforcement will be covered by a new fee. Self-funding for new programs is especially important during the current budget crisis. Finally, plastic bags are a wasteful and environmentally-damaging product from cradle to grave. In pursuit of California's zero waste goals, selectively phasing out some of the most readily substitutable products with ones that are more environmentally-friendly, are a necessary part of the policy solution.

Thank you for your leadership on this issue.

Sincerely,

Laura Tam
Sustainable Development Policy Director