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Statements from Plaintiffs in Federal Lawsuit Challenging California Packaging Law (SB 54)

SACRAMENTO, Calif., — The following statements were provided by organizations participating as plaintiffs in the federal lawsuit challenging California's SB 54.

California League of Food Producers

"California food processors make the foods families rely on every day, from fruits and vegetables to sauces, juices, snacks, and other staples. Packaging is part of how those foods are safely sealed, shipped, stored, and kept fresh. Our concern with SB 54 is that it requires major packaging changes without always accounting for how food products and processing facilities can realistically adapt. We support reducing packaging waste, but the rules need to protect food safety, keep products available and affordable, and give food producers a practical path forward."

American Forest & Paper Association

"Paper and cardboard already have a strong recycling system, supported by businesses and communities that collect and recycle these materials every day. SB 54 should recognize systems that are already working rather than require businesses to pay again for recycling services they already use. Our industry supports recovering more materials and reducing waste, but California should build on successful recycling programs and focus new resources where they are actually needed."

Agricultural Commodity Organizations

"Packaging plays a critical role in getting California-grown food safely from farms to families. It protects fruits, vegetables, nuts, and other agricultural products from damage and contamination, helps preserve freshness, and can prevent food from going to waste. But what works for one product may not work for another, and suitable alternatives are not always available. California agriculture supports reducing waste, but SB 54 must recognize the food safety, quality, and shelf-life needs of the products our farmers grow, retailers and restaurant operators demand and consumers deserve."

California Grocers Association

“Grocers see firsthand how higher costs throughout the supply chain eventually reach families at the checkout line. California stores carry thousands of food, beverage, and household products, each with different packaging and suppliers. SB 54 adds new costs and impossible mandates across that system at a time when many families are already struggling with grocery bills. California can improve recycling without putting additional pressure on access to affordable food and everyday essentials.”

California Restaurant Association

“California restaurants use packaging every day to safely serve takeout and delivery orders and, in some cases, to sell their own sauces, coffee and other products. Under SB 54, a restaurant can become responsible for packaging it did not make simply because its name or brand appears on the product. That creates real confusion for neighborhood restaurants already navigating rising operating costs. Restaurants want to reduce waste, but the rules should be understandable, predictable, and workable for businesses of every size.”

California Retailers Association

“Retailers are where California consumers ultimately feel the impact of packaging policy. Our stores are the final link between thousands of brands and the millions of Californians who rely on them for food, clothing, household goods and other everyday essentials. California retailers support reducing plastic waste and building a more sustainable recycling system, but SB 54 must be implemented in a way that does not unnecessarily increase prices, limit product choices or make everyday goods harder to find. Consumers should not have to bear the cost of a system that is overly complex or unworkable. We can achieve California’s environmental goals while protecting affordability, choice and access for the people we serve every day.”

Californians for Affordable Packaging

“Californians agree on the goal: less packaging waste and a recycling system that works. Our concern is whether SB 54 can even deliver those results, and without significantly increasing the cost of groceries and other everyday necessities. California should build the recycling systems needed to meet its goals, make sure there is clear accountability for how billions of dollars are collected and spent, and protect families from paying more for a program that has not shown it can deliver what was promised.”

Consumer Brands Association

“The makers of America’s trusted household brands are investing in better packaging and stronger recycling systems and support a shared approach to improving the system. The resources companies contribute should produce measurable improvements in collection and recycling. A successful program should make it easier for consumers to recycle and put resources into fixing the system and help keep everyday essentials affordable rather than simply adding new costs for businesses and consumers.”

Dairy Institute of California

“Milk, cheese, and other dairy essentials rely entirely on specialized packaging to guarantee food safety, freshness, and quality. For many critical products, viable alternative packaging simply does not exist. Forcing immediate compliance would mandate drastic, cost-prohibitive overhauls of existing manufacturing and filling equipment. While California’s dairy processors support waste reduction, SB 54 drives up the cost of nutritious food, compromises food safety, and threatens to cripple dairy production across the state.”

Flexible Packaging Association

“Pouches, films and wraps protect food and household products while using very little material and taking up less space during shipping. The challenge is that many communities still lack a way to consistently recycle such flexible packaging. California should use SB 54 to help build those recycling options instead of setting requirements that move faster than the recycling system itself. Flexible packaging is part of a more sustainable future and the recycling infrastructure must be there to support it.”

Personal Care Products Council

“Beauty and personal care packaging has to do much more than hold a product. Bottles, tubes, pumps, and containers must protect formulas, prevent contamination, and allow products to be used safely and effectively. At the same time, personal care companies are already using less material, adding recycled content and developing refillable and reusable packaging. SB 54 should allow that innovation to continue and recognize that there is no single packaging solution that works for every personal care product.”

Pet Food Institute

“Pet food packaging helps keep food safe, preserves its nutritional quality and gives pet owners important information about what they are feeding their dogs and cats. Pet food makers are also working to reduce packaging waste and expand recyclable, reusable and compostable options. Those two responsibilities need to work together. California’s packaging rules should encourage continued progress without requiring changes that could affect the safety, quality or freshness of the food pets rely on.”

Print Creative Alliance

“Companies that print labels, cartons, boxes and other packaging feel the effects of SB 54 directly. Their customers need detailed information about packaging materials and often look to their printers and packaging suppliers to help manage new costs and requirements. These businesses need clear and stable rules so they can plan, invest in new equipment, and help customers move toward more sustainable packaging.”

SNAC International

“Snack packaging is designed to keep products fresh, protect flavor, and prevent food from going stale or being wasted. Those packages often use very little material, but many are not yet accepted by local recycling programs. Snack makers are working toward more sustainable packaging, and they need requirements that are clear, practical, and grounded in how food packaging actually works. California should give companies a realistic path to improve packaging while continuing to protect the products consumers expect.”

Western Growers Association

“Fresh produce packaging is an essential part of the food-safety system. It must protect against contamination, manage moisture and airflow, and keep fruits and vegetables fresh through refrigerated shipping and storage. Growers, shippers and processors cannot simply substitute materials without knowing they will perform safely. We support reducing packaging waste, but California must provide clear, workable rules that protect food safety and recognize the practical limits of available alternatives. Reducing packaging waste should not mean creating more food waste.”

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