

This month:

- 🌀 *sharks* California Fin Ban
- 🌀 *news* ChicoBag Lawsuit
- 🌀 *sharks* Toronto Fin Ban
- 🌀 *news* San Leandro Styrofoam Ban
- 🌀 *other* Print Newsletters Available

Hello fellow ocean lovers!

🌀 California Fin Ban

Autumn heralds a vibrant change of seasons and, in many parts of the world, is accompanied by a kaleidoscope of changing colors. This month has also seen a great wave of changes in policy and practice.

As many of you have likely heard, on 06 September, the California State Senate voted 25 – 9 in favor of Assembly Bill 376, which proposes to ban the sale, trade, possession, and distribution of shark fins in California.

Many thanks to everyone who helped by calling their Senators to ask for their support. Legislators have told us that they really do enjoy hearing from their constituents, and it really did make a difference!

Now that the measure has passed the California Legislature, it sits on the Governor's desk for further action; he can sign it, return it to the Legislature without his signature (i.e., veto), or he can do nothing. If he takes no action before 09 October, it will automatically become law.

The Governor's office granted us a meeting this past week to talk about the bill's merits, and we had a thorough and rewarding conversation. It's still important that they hear from all of you though. We understand that it may be tough to get through on the phone, so you can take a minute to send a quick e-mail. For more information, and to send Governor Jerry Brown a message to urge him to sign AB 376, visit:
www.coare.org/act/ab376/#gov

🌀 ChicoBag Lawsuit

As we reported in our February newsletter, and as was covered in the Rolling Stone article we mentioned last month, ChicoBag, the small California reusable bag maker run by our friend Andy Keller, was being sued by plastic giants who claimed that ChicoBag's website, which provides information and statistics about plastic litter and recycling was false and misleading, and had resulted in 'irreparable harm' to their companies.



We can fight the Bagmonsters! Each Bagmonster comprises 500 single-use plastic bags, a conservative estimate of an average person's use in a single year.

The lawsuit against ChicoBag was filed in South Carolina, a state that has no anti-SLAPP laws. A SLAPP suit (Strategic Lawsuit Against Public Participation) is intended to censor, intimidate, and silence critics by

See Lawsuit on page 2

☺ Toronto Fin Ban

In our May newsletter, we announced that Brantford, Ontario became the first municipality in Canada to ban shark fins. Following in those footsteps were a few other Canadian municipalities, including Toronto, Canada's biggest city. Back in June, when the proposed ban was introduced, it was referred to the Licensing and Standards Committee.

That Committee meeting was finally held this past month, and COARE submitted written testimony in support of the proposed ban. Despite a vast majority of speakers in opposition, the Committee found the testimony in favor to be convincing enough to move forward with the process, and voted unanimously to refer the matter to the Licensing and Standards Division for further investigation and to create a report regarding the matter.

Our communications with the City staff lead us to believe that the report will be completed and returned to the Toronto City Council Committee for their November meeting. If the Committee then approves, it will be returned to the full Council for consideration.

☺ Print Newsletters Available

We're pleased to bring you this newsletter as often as we do. Previous versions of the newsletter are posted online and can be found at www.coare.org/news/archives. While it takes a bit longer to format and publish, we also produce "print" versions of our newsletter (as PDF documents), complete with photos. We encourage you to check out some of our back issues.

☺ San Leandro Styrofoam Ban

On 19 September, the City of San Leandro, California, with a vote of 5-1, just joined many other California cities in banning expanded polystyrene (styrofoam) foodware. Despite the fact that many people think that styrofoam is already banned, it still appears in a number of cities, and it continues to be one of the most recognizable and most pervasive forms of litter in our oceans and along our shores. It was a tougher battle than we anticipated, with a number of people speaking from a place of resistance or from misunderstanding. COARE was able to provide closing testimony during the public comment session, and the City Council subsequently voted strongly in favor of the proposed ban, which will begin November 2012.



As more municipalities ban expanded polystyrene, bins full of styrofoam like this will hopefully become a thing of the past.

☺ Lawsuit

Continued from page 1

burdening them with the cost of a legal defense until they abandon their criticism or opposition.

On 13 September, ChicoBag Founder and President Andy Keller presented Hilex Poly, one of the plaintiffs, with more than 25,000 petition signatures collected by COARE, Care2, Surfrider Foundation, Heal the Bay, and a number of other grassroots organizations, urging them to drop the case. We're pleased to report that each of the three plastic companies has agreed to drop the suit.