

For Immediate Release:
Nov 19, 2007, 8:00 AM PST

For More Information Contact:

Christine Flowers-Ewing, Keep California Beautiful, (916) 368-9301 or cell 844-6457,
cflowers@cleanca.org

Alicia Rockwell, Save Mart, (209) 548-6511, arockwell@savemart.com

Joanna Brody, Roplast Industries, (310) 582-0085, Joanna@brody-pr.com

Reusable Bag Includes Anti-Litter Message

Partnership to support use of reusable bags

Sacramento, Calif. (PRWEB) – Keep California Beautiful (KCB) in partnership with the California Integrated Waste Management Board, Save Mart Supermarkets, and Roplast Industries has developed anti-litter messaging for placement on the reusable plastic Bring Back Bag® that Save Mart plans on offering in all 248 of its Save Mart, Lucky, S-Mart Foods, and Food Maxx stores throughout Northern California and Northern Nevada by the end of the year.

At an event starting at 10:00 AM November 20, 2007 at the Lucky store on Fulton Street in San Francisco, Keep California Beautiful will provide reusable bags free of charge to customers. The bags normally retail for 25 cents each. Customers will receive 5 cents back each time they bring the reusable bag to a Lucky store. Since customers will be able to use a single bag at least 20 times, at 5 cents per reuse, they can actually earn money on these bags. Reusable bags are an option to help reduce environmental impact; but only if they are used by the majority of consumers, and then recycled at the end of life. If reusable bags were used instead of 330 single use bags a year (or six bags per week) by each Californian, there would be approximately one billion fewer single use bags to become potential litter or part of the disposal problem in California's landfills. Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi, who authored the San Francisco Plastic Bag Reduction Ordinance, which goes into effect November 20, 2007, will be on hand to sign a pledge to personally use a reusable bag.

Save Mart Supermarkets introduced the reusable, recyclable plastic handle bags, which are made from recycled plastic in July 2007. Beginning on October 23, 2007 a new version of the bag became available; providing anti-litter messaging supported by Keep California Beautiful and the California Integrated Waste Management Board. The new bag features attractive artwork highlighting the American River Parkway as one of California's many beautiful places. The intent is to promote other beautiful places in California with future versions of the reusable bag.

The bags are in compliance with the San Francisco Plastic Bag Reduction Ordinance, which requires grocery stores to provide only reusable and/or compostable plastic bags to customers at checkout. With dimensions of 18 x 16 x 8 inches, the reusable bag is 15-20 percent larger than a paper handle bag. It can hold approximately 50 percent more volume and weight than a standard plastic bag, holding over 25 lbs. of groceries. The bags are recyclable alongside other plastic grocery bags in supermarket recycling bins recently mandated by AB 2449 (Levine) Plastic Bag Litter and Waste Reduction Act.

During the next year Keep California Beautiful will be working to help promote environmental education messaging and public outreach supporting the need to affect public perception and individual responsibility regarding the use of reusable bags. According to Christine Flowers-Ewing, Executive Director of Keep California Beautiful, “the organization supports the use of a variety of reusable bags because consumers will make the choice based on what is important to them regarding the attributes of the bag. For the consumer, when the question is asked in the checkout line regarding bag choice, the answer should not be paper or plastic for single use bags; instead a reusable bag is the choice. The decision to use a reusable bag is the first step, remembering to bring the bag back to the store is the second.” Many factors influence the decision a consumer will make regarding which reusable bag to use including but not limited to its size, style, material type, location of manufacture, recyclability, the possibility it contains toxic chemicals and cost.

The reusable bags available through this partnership are custom-designed and produced by Northern California plastic bag and film manufacturer Roplast Industries, Inc. Recyclable, and manufactured with 20 percent recycled material, the bags are from one of Roplast’s environmental product lines called the Bring Back Bag®. The bag is made from co-extruded film using special blends to improve the gloss, strength and stiffness, so that it stands up like paper bags for loading. Robert Bateman, president of Roplast Industries notes, “This program, put together in a partnership is good for the environment and a bonus for shoppers, who can get their money back many times over. As an article in the August edition of National Geographic points out, reusable bags are recognized as the most environmentally friendly choice for grocery bags. And since the bags are made in California, we are cutting back on fossil fuels and traffic by not transporting them long distances.”

According to the Progressive Bag Alliance (PBA), California retailers distribute more than 19 billion plastic retail carry out bags annually. Less than 5% are currently recycled. At-store plastic bag recycling programs provide California

consumers with a convenient network of more than 7,000 locations for bag recycling. Using a reusable bag is important to source reduction of single use bags however, it is key that consumers recycle single use carry out bags they do end up with. Paper bags can be recycled with mixed paper recycling at end of life and thin plastic carry out bags can easily be recycled at the a store cycling bins required by AB 2449 (Levine) or in some cases curbside collection programs.

Save Mart is a locally owned and operated company that has been in the grocery business for more than 50 years. The Save Mart team understands the California consumer because they are Californians. Save Mart is a California-based grocery operation, which is family-owned and privately held. Save Mart is a market leader in the Central Valley. The company was founded January 17, 1952 in Modesto and today operates 248 stores throughout Northern California and Northern Nevada under the banner names of Save Mart, Lucky, S-Mart Foods, and Food Maxx from its headquarters in Modesto.

Roplast Industries' fully integrated 130,000 square foot manufacturing and corporate office is located in Oroville, California, 60 miles north of Sacramento in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. The company's manufacturing plant is accredited by the California Film Extruders & Converters Association's Environmentally Preferred Rating (EPR) program, as complying with the most environmentally sensitive manufacturing practices. EPR accreditation is an industry "seal of approval," given to plastic makers that meet strict environmental standards certifying that they maintain environmentally sensitive production facilities. For more information on EPR, visit www.EPRaccredited.org. For more information on Roplast Industries, including the company's environmental perspective and product line, visit www.roplast.com.

Keep California Beautiful, an affiliate of Keep America Beautiful, is a nonprofit environmental organization. KCB's mission is to promote individual responsibility for California's environment through source reduction, litter prevention, recycling, and beautification. KCB pursues this mission by developing public/private partnerships at the state level as a way to provide necessary resources to local communities. For more information on our programs please visit www.cleanca.org