



## Memorandum

To: Mayor and City Council

May 6, 2008

From: Suja Lowenthal, Second District *SL*

Subject: Travel Report

---

### REQUESTED ACTION:

To receive and file a report on travel to Sacramento to participate in a meeting of representatives from State-level departments, boards and commissions and Senator Alan Lowenthal concerning funding and programs dedicated to reducing marine debris.

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

On Thursday, May 1, I attended a meeting hosted by Senator Alan Lowenthal to discuss the level of funding and effectiveness of programs created to reduce the amount of marine debris impacting our local coastal environment. Representatives from the State Water Board, Department of Conservation, California Coastal Commission, Ocean Protection Council and the Resources Agency were invited to the meeting.

The following information is provided by the Ocean Protection Council:

- 60 to 80 percent of all marine debris and 90 percent of floating debris is plastic.
- The U.S. Department of Commerce estimates that 80 percent of marine debris comes from land-based sources
- Plastic attracts other organisms that can float to distant habitats and become harmful invasive species
- Plastic and other debris litters our beaches, and represents a threat to California's \$46 billion ocean-dependent, tourism-oriented economy and in certain circumstances may pose a public health threat
- California state and local agencies spend millions of dollars per year in litter collection.
- Plastics can contain potentially harmful constituents such as phthalates, bisphenol A, styrene, vinyl chloride and flame retardants.
- Small plastic items, such as bottle caps, food wrappers and polystyrene pieces, are some of the most abundant items polluting our beaches. In 2005, 61,117 bottle caps were collected during California's Coastal Cleanup Day;
- According to a study conducted by the U.S. Department of Commerce, over 1 million birds, 100,000 marine animals and countless fish die each year through ingestion of and entanglement in marine debris.