

Big retailers are breaking California law and misleading consumers by selling plastic shopping bags bearing language and symbols that falsely suggest the bags can be recycled, a state-appointed commission alleged this month, [Reuters](#) reports.

The group has asked California to force retailers to strip these bags of the ubiquitous "chasing arrows" logo and the words "recycle" and "recyclable," Reuters has learned.

If successful, that move could make the sacks ineligible for sale at checkout counters throughout America's most populous state. The commission also is taking aim at padded envelopes and packaging materials used for home delivery, and plastic films on some grocery items.

In a Dec. 3 letter viewed by Reuters, the [California Statewide Commission on Recycling Markets and Curbside Recycling](#) asked the California attorney general and regulator CalRecycle to crack down on what it claims is illegal labeling that's undermining the state's efforts to tackle plastic pollution.

Foiled by recycling symbols, Californians mistakenly are tossing this material into curbside collection programs that don't accept it, the commission said. That's driving up costs for recycling companies to fish the stuff out of the waste stream and fix equipment jammed by these soft plastics.

The complaint did not single out any retailers by name. The [California Grocers Association](#) (CGA) said it does not believe current recycling labels on reusable bags are misleading.

CGA spokesperson Nate Rose said the bags meet the law's certification guidelines - including requirements that they be made of a minimum of 40% post-consumer recycled material and be durable enough to be used 125 times.