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REVIEW & OUTLOOK

California's Next Ban: Paper Receipts

Helping hometown companies in the name of green virtue.

By The Editorial Board

First they came for the plastic bags, then plastic straws. Now California progressives want to ban paper receipts. Like so many other liberal crusades, the fight against paper receipts is cronyism masquerading as green virtue.

California's good liberals see a green villain behind every corner. If something doesn't kill sea turtles then it will likely give you cancer. The state banned single-use plastic bags in 2016, which was followed last year by a prohibition on plastic straws in restaurants. Warnings are required on products that regulators deem even remotely carcinogenic, from potato chips to aspirin.

The latest scourge is paper receipts. According to state Assemblyman Phil Ting of San Francisco, receipts generate 686 million pounds of waste and 12 billion pounds of carbon dioxide each year, the equivalent of one million cars on the road. They may also contain

the chemical BPA, which could cause birth defects if ingested in high doses. Is eating receipts a new diet fad in California?

Mr. Ting this week proposed legislation requiring businesses to offer e-receipts as the default option or pay a fine of $25 per day. Many merchants are upgrading to mobile payment processing and checkout systems because millennials spurn cash and all things paper. But his bill would mandate that all businesses adopt such new hardware and software systems.

As it happens, the biggest beneficiary would likely be Square Inc., whose headquarters is in San Francisco and is run by CEO Jack Dorsey of Twitter fame. Mr. Ting's bill notes that, "Data from Square, a company that provides mobile payment services, shows that their sellers send over 10 million digital receipts each month." PayPal (San Jose), Stripe (San Francisco) and Wells Fargo (San Francisco) also offer online registers. Funny how political favoritism appears behind most green regulation.