

**MEETING NOTES**  
SINGLE USE BAG REDUCTION AND RECYCLING PROGRAM

**Store Operations Subcommittee Meeting**

Wednesday, February 18, 2009, 9:00 a.m.

Department of Public Works, Environmental Programs Division, Large Conference Room

**I. Introductions**

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. Those in attendance were: Emiko Thompson, Nilda Gemeniano, Angie Nguyen, and Christine Frias with the County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works; Ritu Sehgal with the County of Los Angeles Internal Services Department; and Rodney Cyr with The Environmental Coalition.

**II. Program Status and Development**

a. Store Site Visits

Ms. Nguyen provided an update on the store site visits and checklists received. To date, Public Works staff conducted site visits at 38 stores in the unincorporated County areas. Of the 38 stores visited, 20 qualified as Category 1 stores, and 18 were either no longer in business, corporate offices, changed to other types of businesses, or too small to qualify as Category 1 stores.

The total number of checklists completed to date is 48, of which 28 are from qualifying Category 1 stores, and 20 account for non-qualifying stores. The checklists continue to collectively indicate that many large stores have recycling bins for plastic bags and sell reusable bags. Some stores have plans to encourage shoppers to use reusable bags on Earth Day or during community outreach events.

Many of the smaller stores visited in the unincorporated Covina and Rowland Heights areas did not sell reusable bags, nor did they provide recycling bins for plastic bags. One store in West Covina was particularly supportive of the Program, and the manager enthusiastically informed us that their corporate office was looking into providing reusable bags to their customers and implementing incentives to decrease consumption of plastic bags.

Public Works will continue to conduct site visits at stores in the unincorporated County areas and provide updates.

b. Store Operations

Ms. Thompson relayed information from Mr. Rick Crandall, Albertsons' Director of Environmental Stewardship, who was unable to attend this meeting. Albertsons will begin including environmental messages in their weekly newsletter ads. This may be another avenue by which collaborative outreach efforts with Albertsons could be made. Ms. Thompson also reported that Mr. Crandall will be speaking with Albertsons' corporate managers about

opportunities to distribute the "Single Use Bag Reduction and Recycling Program" brochure throughout Albertsons stores in Los Angeles County.

c. Cities Participation

Ms. Gemeniano provided an update on the cities participation. The City of Glendale plans to create a Public Service Announcement promoting the Program, to air on the City's cable TV channel. The City will also be creating a DVD to be distributed to local stores.

The City of Azusa gave away 300 reusable bags at the opening of a local Fresh & Easy supermarket on February 11, 2009. They plan to conduct other reusable bag giveaways at City events throughout the year, including the City's "Clean & Green Month" in April. They will have stores give away City reusable bags every month until the end of the fiscal year. Additionally, the City is promoting the Program through bus shelter panels. They are also creating a brochure for their recycling programs which will include single use bag recycling. Their Stater Brothers and Fresh & Easy Supermarkets, as well as two smaller stores have also expressed interest in implementing program components.

The City of Hermosa Beach will promote the Program in their city newsletter. Bag giveaway events will also be conducted. A committee comprised of residents will be established to more fully implement the Program in the City.

About half of the partner cities have distributed the Program Resource Packet to various stores. Some cities received feedback through checklists, and some are conducting store site visits to reconfirm store listings and to help managers better understand the program.

A chart tabulating the various city activities has been updated, and the current version will be available on the Program website.

d. Website Update

Ms. Frias provided an update on the program website. Since the last Working Group meeting four additional articles have been posted on the News page section of the website:

- The Long Beach Aquarium's newsletter, Pacific Currents, published an article on reducing ocean litter, and the proposed state legislation that will address litter reduction issues of the Pacific Ocean.
- Portland, Maine, revised the proposed legislation for a plastic bag fee from 20 cents to 10 cents, to be applied to all retailers.
- Supervisor Gloria Molina's "A Green Bag for a Green Earth" Campaign was reported in the Downey Patriot.
- The plastic industry in Silicon Valley has been fervently lobbying against proposed legislation to ban plastic bags.

Additionally, legislative updates were included on the website, and a link to the feature article in California Verde magazine about this Program was also added. The 2009 guidelines and application for the County of Los Angeles Green Leadership Award were also posted on the Public Works' Environmental Programs Division website, [www.888cleanla.com](http://www.888cleanla.com).

### **III. Open Discussion on Program**

Ms. Thompson described the following updates on the Program brochure based on stakeholder comments:

- Some verbiage was added such as, "Set a Good Example for your Community" on the front cover. On the back cover, "Plastic Bag Tips" was revised to "Single Use Bag Tips."
- The photographs of the cow chewing on the plastic bag, and the plastic bag in the ocean were replaced with photographs of plastic bags near a catch basin, and a shopper loading reusable bags into a vehicle.
- Other minor changes included shifting text and graphics for a more aesthetically pleasing layout.

During the store site visits some of the smaller stores expressed they were not aware of the AB2449 requirements, and some chain stores indicated that additional incentives may be necessary to implement the program. Subcommittee members suggested contacting the corporate offices of chain stores as well as continuing the store site visits.

Mr. Rodney Cyr from Denver Colorado, representing The Environmental Coalition, demonstrated their 4ever Bag and how it could be folded into a small pouch for convenience. Their non-profit Coalition conducts in-store marketing campaigns through activities such as providing signs, inflatable stands, or people in front of stores to remind customers to bring their reusable bags. Mr. Cyr pointed out that the 4ever Bags are made from nylon polyester, and that their research concluded that darker colored bags are more gender neutral and effective in hiding stains. The bottom of the 4ever Bag has a wide gusset and thick seaming capable of holding heavy items.

### **IV. Next Steps**

The next Working Group meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 18, 2009, at 2:00 p.m., in Conference Room D of the Department of Public Works' headquarters.