

MEETING NOTES
SINGLE USE BAG REDUCTION AND RECYCLING PROGRAM

Working Group Meeting

Wednesday, June 2, 2010, 10:00 a.m.

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

I. Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 am. Coby Skye of Public Works welcomed the Working Group, and introductions were made among attendees and phone participants.

Those in attendance were as follows: Suk Chong, Coby Skye, Nilda Gemeniano, Luke Mitchell, Stacy Harvey, Sevak Khatchadorian, Rhonda Small, Kattya Batres, and Gabriel Arenas with County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works (Public Works); Andrea Harbin with Creative Environmental Solutions, Anna Valcarcel and Lars Clutterham with the City of Downey's Green Task Force, Jinderpal Bhandal with City of Los Angeles, and Nick Morell with Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County. Those in attendance via conference call were: Jennifer Forkish and Samantha Martinez with the American Chemistry Council, Jacy Bolden with City of Encinitas, Rebecca Nelson with City of Malibu, Linda McClure with City of Covina, Chandler Hadraba with California Film Extruders and Converters Association, Stephen Joseph representing Save the Plastic Bag Coalition, and Dorothea Park with County of Los Angeles Chief Executive Office.

II. News and Updates

a) Recent Developments

Mr. Harvey reported on some of the recent articles relating to single use bags:

- A beached gray whale found on a West Seattle beach found a surprising amount of human debris, including plastic bags, likely lead to its demise.
- After one year of the plastic bag ban in effect in Westport, Connecticut, customers seem more willing to use reusable bags or no bags at all when shopping.

The Los Angeles Superior Court denied the petition of Save the Plastic Bag Coalition and entered judgment in favor of the County, allowing the continued implementation of this Program. Mr. Stephen Joseph noted the Save the Plastic Bag Coalition had withdrawn a portion of their lawsuit

immediately prior to the judges ruling, following the County's agreement to stipulate that the County had not predetermined their intent to ban plastic carryout bags.

The Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) to support proposed ordinances to ban plastic carryout bags in Los Angeles County was publicly released on June 1, 2010, and may be downloaded from the Program website. It will also be made available at County libraries for viewing. To solicit additional public comment on the DEIR, six public meetings will be held throughout the County.

Copies of the motion approved by the County Board of Supervisors on June 1, 2010, supporting the passage of statewide legislation (AB 1998) to ban single use plastic bags in California, were passed out to meeting attendees.

b) Legislative Updates

Mr. Gamiño provided an update on bills relating to plastic bags. To date, there are five that are still under consideration in the State legislature.

- AB 903 – Beginning July 1, 2010, compostable plastic bag manufacturers would be required to ensure that their compostable plastic bags are readily and easily identifiable from other plastic bags. The bill is being held under submission in the Senate Appropriations committee.
- AB 1998 - On and after January 1, 2012, certain types of stores, as defined, will be prohibited from providing single-use plastic carryout bags to customers. On and after July 1, 2013, convenience food stores, food marts, and certain specified stores will be prohibited from providing single-use carryout bags to customers, and stores would be required to make reusable bags available for purchase or provide recycled paper bags at a reasonable cost but not less than \$0.05. The bill was voted in the Assembly Appropriations committee last Friday, May 28 to be passed on to the Assembly floor for house approval.
- AB 2138 - From July 2, 2011 until July 1, 2013, food providers will be prohibited from distributing disposable food service packaging or single-use carryout bags, as defined, unless the packaging or bags meet the criteria for either compostable packaging or recyclable packaging. On and after July 1, 2013, food providers would be prohibited from distributing disposable food service packaging or single-use carryout bags to consumers, unless the California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle)

determines the packaging or bag is recovered for composting or recovered for recycling at a rate of 25 percent or more. The bill is being held under submission in the Assembly Appropriations committee.

- SB 228 - Beginning July 1, 2010, compostable plastic bag manufacturers would be required to ensure their compostable plastic bags are readily and easily identifiable from other plastic bags. The bill is currently in the Assembly Natural Resources committee.
- SB 531 – By January 1, 2012, the Waste Board would be required to modify and approve educational materials that manufacturers provide to stores on and after July 1, 2011 for reducing, reusing, and recycling plastic bags. SB 531 would also set minimum requirements for information to be included in the educational materials. The bill is currently in the Assembly Natural Resources committee.

June 4, 2010 is the deadline for all bills to be approved by their originating legislative house.

c) Website Updates

Mr. Mitchell provided an update on changes made to the Program website since the last Working Group meeting. Six new articles have been added to the News page, and the Program's Quarterly Progress Report No. 9 dated May 5, 2010 has been added to the Resources page. The DEIR and public notice of meetings are now posted on the Environmental Documents page.

III. Program Status

a) Store Participation

Mr. Mitchell reported on the status of store participation in the Program. Five more stores have submitted Participation Checklists since the last Working Group meeting. Overall, twenty stores in the unincorporated areas have provided checklists to report on the progress of implementing the Program. Since the rollout of this Program to stores, the checklists show an 86 percent increase in store personnel training, a 57 percent increase in providing customer incentives, and a 78 percent increase in public education.

b) Public Education and Outreach

Mr. Arenas reported on public outreach efforts relating to the Program. Over 25,000 people visited Public Works' environmental booth at 12 Earth Day celebrations attended by County staff. Approximately 4,000 bags were distributed at these events. Upcoming community events where a limited supply of County reusable tote bags will be distributed to attendees include: Marvin Elementary School Environmental Fair on June 3, 2010 and Emmaus Lutheran Church and School environmental presentation on June 14, 2010.

Mr. Clutterham reported on the efforts by City of Downey's Green Task Force relating to single use bags. They had partnered with a local elementary school for a bag recycling and exchange campaign that culminated on Earth Day. Initially, presentation attendees received 1 free reusable bag at the beginning of the campaign, and students received a free reusable bag in exchange for bringing 10 single use bags. Approximately 12,000 single use bags were collected for recycling and a total of 2,000 reusable bags were distributed during the campaign. In addition to the bag recycling and exchange, a reusable bag decoration contest was held. The city has also partnered with Algalita Marine Research Foundation to present the campaign at another school on June 4, 2010 to 3rd through 5th grade school children.

Mr. Bhandal added that the City of Los Angeles had distributed reusable bags to residents during city-sponsored events. He presented the Working Group with the reusable bags distributed at the community events.

Ms. Harbin announced that the community event coordinated by Creative Environmental Solutions planned to be held last May has been rescheduled to be held on September 26, 2010 in the city of Paramount. During this event, materials to educate attendees on the environment will be disseminated, and other activities will be conducted to increase awareness of the environmental impacts of single use bag litter.

c) Data Gathering

Ms. Gemeniano reported on efforts to gather data for determining the disposal reduction of plastic bags in the unincorporated County areas. The American Chemistry Council (ACC) with the assistance of a consultant, Moore Recycling Associates, Inc., has provided plastic bag recycling data through curbside programs from 2007 to 2009. Staff is working to verify the data provided.

Public Works staff also recently obtained 2008 at-store recycling data from CalRecycle. Public Works sent out a letter to all Category 1 stores requesting plastic bag purchasing and recycling data as well as Program feedback. Public Works staff continues to contact stores by phone and will be conducting onsite visits to further assist stores in implementing the program and releasing plastic bag data to the County.

IV. Update on Expanded Polystyrene Efforts

Mr. Skye provided an update on efforts to restrict expanded polystyrene (EPS) usage in the County. Staff is moving forward with a Board Letter providing recommendations restricting EPS food containers in County departments and operations. More information will be sent out in the next few weeks.

V. Next Steps

An email will be sent out shortly to Program stakeholders with information on the DEIR and the public comment process.