

MEETING NOTES
SINGLE USE BAG REDUCTION AND RECYCLING PROGRAM

Technical Advisory Subcommittee Meeting

Wednesday, June 17, 2009, 11:00 a.m.

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

I. Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 11:00 a.m. Those in attendance were: Emiko Thompson, Nilda Gemeniano, Angie Nguyen, Suk Chong, and Christine Frias with the County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works; Burt Kumagawa with the County of Los Angeles Chief Executive Office; Ritu Sehgal with the County of Los Angeles Internal Services Department; and Pat Smith with Earth Share of California. Those who attended via conference call were: Jennifer Forkish and Judith Dunbar representing the American Chemistry Council (ACC).

II. Technical Advisory Program Components

a. Store Site Visits with the Plastic Recycling Corporation of California

Ms. Gemeniano provided a report regarding the store site visits conducted with Plastic Recycling Corporation of California.

Staff, together with ACC's consultant Plastic Recycling Corporation of California (PRCC), revisited some of the Category 1 stores in the unincorporated County areas where there were no recycling bins or only temporary bins were found during the initial site visits. The purpose of these follow-up visits was to assist stores in enhancing their recycling program for plastic bags. The team provided store managers with information about plastic bag recycling services. Stores affiliated with Unified Grocers may purchase reusable bags, and obtain a bin, baling equipment, and collection service for plastic bag recycling from the Unified Grocers.

Stores that were members of the Unified Grocers were encouraged to request the service from their association, while other stores were asked about their current recycling practices. If these stores committed to implementing plastic bag recycling, PRCC would then coordinate obtaining free hauling services and baling equipment for the stores. PRCC will contact the ACC to provide free plastic bag recycling bins to stores that have successfully set up recycling service.

Staff will follow up with the ACC and individual stores to reconfirm that bins are being provided and plastic bag recycling services are being implemented at these stores.

b. Curbside Recycling Data and Programs

Ms. Gemeniano provided an update on curbside recycling data and programs.

On April 30, 2009, PRCC sent a letter reporting the aggregated amount of plastic bags recycled in 2007 from the unincorporated areas. The data collected from various materials recovery facilities (MRF) reported the amount collected from residential curbside recycling programs in the unincorporated County areas. Facilities reported on bags collected from the County as a whole, then provided percentages of those quantities collected from unincorporated areas.

Public Works will continue to work with the ACC to obtain the 2008 curbside recycling data.

Ms. Dunbar explained that due to proprietary information and potential contracts with various cities, quantities reported by individual MRF's cannot be disclosed.

Ms. Thompson reiterated that any proposed modifications to the existing disposal reduction rate methodology formula would be considered, especially if there are technical studies or information to support any revision proposals.

c. Upcoming Store Partnership Program

Ms. Thompson reported on an upcoming store partnership campaign proposal. Partnerships may include grocery stores, radio stations, non-profit organizations, and other interested groups.

The goal of the campaign would be to promote reusable bags, enhance recycling of plastic bags, and educate the public about the Program and the impacts of litter from single use bags. A resolution could be adopted by the County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors on November 10, 2009, and the campaign would kick off on "America Recycles Day," on November 15th. Each Saturday, thereafter, various supermarkets and grocery stores in the unincorporated County areas and participating cities would host events at which store patrons could bring a specified number of single use plastic bags to exchange with a reusable bag. In addition to those Saturdays, the bag exchange events would also be done on the Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday before Thanksgiving, when grocery shopping is at its peak. The campaign would end on Heal the Bay's "A Day Without a Bag" on December 17, 2009.

III. Open Discussion on Program

Ms. Dunbar offered to provide the Program with additional magnets and flyers encouraging the recycling of plastic bags. The materials include depictions of the various types of consumer plastic packaging material that could be recycled.

IV. Next Steps

The next Working Group meeting will be held on Wednesday, July 15, 2009, at the County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works.