

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

**Working Group Meeting**

Wednesday, August 19, 2009, 10:00 a.m.

Department of Public Works, Annex Building 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Conference Room

**I. Introductions**

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

**II. News and Updates**

a) Recent Articles

Mr. Khatchadorian reported on recent news related to single use bags and articles recently posted on the News page of the Program website:

- The city of Santa Barbara, along with several community organizations, launched a new environmental awareness campaign in an effort to reduce the use of single use bags. The “Where’s Your Bag” campaign will hand out bags and put up signs reminding people to bring their reusable bags to stores.
- Similarly, San Jose launched the “Got Your Bags?” campaign, an education and outreach effort encouraging consumers to bring their reusable bags to stores and promoting environmental awareness in innovative ways.
- The Junior Women’s Club of Northern Boston has started sending used plastic bags to the Dominican Republic, where women in impoverished communities crochet them into reusable tote bags.
- According to election returns from Tuesday, August 18, 2009 vote of Seattle’s Referendum No. 1, the legislative measure to charge a 20-cent fee for using disposable grocery bags was defeated - 58 percent to 42 percent.
- Hong Kong reported an 85% drop in plastic bag use only two days after the introduction of a citywide fifty Hong Kong cent tax on plastic bags.
- The successful plastic bag ban in China, where retail stores are required to charge for plastic bags instead of giving them away for free, reduced their use of plastic bags by about 66%.

In connection with the recent articles posted on the Program website, it was reported that the Quarterly Report Number 6, dated August 3, 2009, was also posted on the Program website, on the Resources page. The quarterly report provides the County Board of Supervisors with an update on activities of the last

quarter, on reduction efforts for both single use bags as well as food containers made from expanded polystyrene, also known as Styrofoam™.

b) Environmental Impact Report Update

Ms. Gemeniano updated the Working Group on the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) being prepared for the ordinance requested by the County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors.

Public Works has retained a consultant, named Sapphos Environmental, to prepare the EIR. Staff has been working with the consultant to develop an EIR that may also be used by cities within the County. The public scoping meetings for the draft of the Initial Study is planned to be held at public locations around the County in October or November. The EIR, along with the ordinance, will be submitted to the County Board of Supervisors for consideration in July 2010. This will allow sufficient time to conduct public meetings and obtain feedback.

### III. Program Status

a) Cities Participation

Ms. Gemeniano updated the Working Group on work being done with cities to expand the Program and make more County residents aware of the litter impacts of single use bags.

The City of Pico Rivera distributes free recycled-content reusable bags with the Program brochure at certain city-sponsored events and also makes them available at city facilities. They continue to visit stores within the city to introduce the Program, and have found that the large chain stores, such as Ralphs, provide recycling bins for plastic bag collection and make reusable bags available for customers. The City of Azusa has created their brochure on city recycling and conservation programs, which also promotes reusable bags.

246 stores in Los Angeles County have received information on the Program so far. Follow up with Partner Cities continue to further assist stores in implementing the Program components. The update table of city participation will be posted on the website.

Ms. Kim Nilsson, who works with the assistant to the City Manager of Agoura Hills, is hoping to take the Resolution to their City Council on the first meeting in September. Public Works staff is willing to assist the city in meeting with their grocery stores to implement the Program. The Public Works Manager of the City of Malibu is considering taking the Resolution to their City Council in September/October. Although the city has already banned plastic bags in their city grocery stores, they plan to support the County Program to strengthen regional impact. The City Manager and Public Works Director of the City of Bell Gardens are also considering having the City join the voluntary Program. Cities are free to adjust the language of the sample Resolution to accommodate their needs and concerns.

b) Community Outreach

Ms. Gemeniano provided an update on the Program's community outreach efforts. Since the last Working Group meeting, Public Works staff distributed educational and promotional materials, including the Brag About Your Bag<sup>®</sup> reusable bags, at four community and environmentally-focused events, which included:

- "Get Hip, Go Green" events on July 18 and August 1 at Charter Oak Park, Avocado Heights, and Whittier Narrows Park where nearly 300 Brag About Your Bag<sup>®</sup> reusable bags and Program brochures were distributed
- And the 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Government Day on July 25 at Panorama Mall, where approximately 200 bags and brochures were distributed.

c) Public Education Campaign

Ms. Jimenez informed the Working Group that Public Works staff held a meeting to present the campaign to stores. We are waiting for store partnership commitment from How's Market, KV Mart, and Ralphs/Food 4 Less. Albertsons has informed us that they are willing to partner in this campaign. The campaign is scheduled to run from November 15, 2009, "America Recycles Day", to December 17, 2009, "Day Without A Bag". Booths will be set up in front of participating stores to collect plastic bags for recycling and distribution of reusable bags, while residents are educated with brochures and other information. The campaign plans to target the holiday store traffic, with a goal to distribute 50,000 reusable bags at over 100 store events. We plan to ask residents to return 10 plastic bags for 1 reusable bag with a 2 reusable bag limit per person. Donations of reusable bags are welcome.

Proposed partners for media buys are being reviewed for EPD administrative approval. Ms. Park recommended working now with County community programs and community groups to later promote the campaign to residents.

#### **IV. Update on Expanded Polystyrene Efforts**

Mr. Skye provided an update regarding the County's efforts to reduce the usage of single use food containers made from expanded polystyrene (EPS) within County operations.

Public Works has retained a consultant, named Responsible Purchasing Network, which teamed up with Dr. Arpad Horvath from U.C. Berkeley, to conduct life cycle analyses (LCAs) with regard to alternatives to expanded polystyrene food containers. The draft report has been submitted, including recommendations on food containers for the County to use glass or ceramic reusable products whenever feasible.

When reusable products are not feasible, the LCAs recommend:

- If products can be composted, use compostable products.
- If products can be recycled, use paper products.

The final report and LCA report will be finalized and shared with the Working Group in a few weeks. Next month, Public Works intends to prepare recommended actions to reduce EPS food containers in County operations to submit to the County Board of Supervisors.

Public Works has worked with the Sheriff's Department and developed a contract for recycling EPS food containers from Sheriff's facilities. The scope of work for the contract includes collection of EPS food containers that do not require rinsing of waste food containers before collection. The contract is currently posted to accept bids.

**V. Next Steps**

We will keep you posted on the deliverables for the Program as well as for the EIR, EPS Recycling contract, and Alternative EPS Food Containers at County operations.