

MEETING NOTES
SINGLE USE BAG REDUCTION AND RECYCLING PROGRAM

Public Education Subcommittee Meeting

Wednesday, November 5, 2008, 10:00 am

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

I. Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. Those in attendance were: Emiko Thompson, Hossam Banna, Nilda Gemeniano, and Iwen Tseng with the County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works; Burt Kumagawa with the County of Los Angeles Chief Executive Office; Matthew Dodson with the California Grocers Association; Stephen Joseph with Save the Plastic Bag coalition; Christine Flowers with Keep California Beautiful; and Anita Jimenez with the City of Santa Fe Springs.

II. Program Status

a. Checklists Received

Ms. Iwen Tseng provided an update on the checklists received by grocery stores. It was reported that in October, members of the subcommittee agreed to call grocery stores to ensure that all had received the program packets and checklist. After approval from Mr. Matthew Dodson from the California Grocers Association (CGA), Public Works began contacting the 121 stores in the County unincorporated areas during the week of October 20, 2008. Within a two week period, Public Works reached all stores and receive eight additional checklists. The total number of checklists received is eleven. Six out of the eight newly received checklists were from large supermarkets, and showed that most had already incorporated many of the components identified on the checklist. The other additional two checklists were from smaller stores who indicated that they do not currently have any reusable bags for sale.

To encourage checklist submittals from stores Public Works is setting up an online checklist submittal feature, which will be available on the Program website.

b. Cities Participation

Public Works continues to keep in contact with the cities and assist them in finding resources to obtain store information in their local areas. Public Works also contacted other cities that were interested in joining the program, such as the City of Pomona and the City of Burbank.

III. Program Development

a. Store Updates

Since it was established during the previous meetings that direct store contact would be beneficial, Public Works will conduct site visits to each of the unincorporated area stores using in-house staff. Site visits would provide for a

more complete understanding of what stores are already doing as well as insight on any barriers in implementing some of the Program components.

Public Works is developing a questionnaire which will be disseminated for stakeholder review, after which Public Works will deploy teams to conduct the site visits. The subcommittees will be updated on this effort.

Regarding plastic bag recycling, the American Chemistry Council has provided their outreach material and gave their permission, along with the CGA's permission, to use the material at the stores. During the store site visits the teams will have this material available for distribution at the stores' discretion.

b. Discussion on Proposed Contract Components Pertaining to Public Education

Public education is an area where consultant expertise could assist the efforts and activities of the subcommittee. For example, based on the anti-litter hot spots, a consultant could identify the most appropriate and effective media outlet. Some of the creative tasks in developing outreach could be maintained within the subcommittee. However, for production and dissemination activities, utilizing consultant services may be effective. It was also noted that some of the subcommittee members have expressed interest in helping create the outreach material.

An update was given regarding the upcoming "A Day Without a Bag" event which will be held on Thursday, December 18, 2008, and sponsored by Heal the Bay. Public Works has been coordinating with Kirsten James of Heal the Bay to provide reusable bags for the event. Public Works has also begun drafting a resolution for the County Board of Supervisors to proclaim the third Thursday of December each year as "A Day Without a Bag" in L.A. County.

At the previous public education subcommittee meeting, Ms. Vicky Limon with the L.A. County Office of Education suggested utilizing existing countywide education programs to promote this Program. To stimulate interests among schools and reach out to children, the subcommittee proposed several ideas such as competitions to develop a Program logo to accompany the Brag About Your Bag[®] slogan, or a reusable bag design contest.

Ms. Christine Flowers commented that Wal-Mart implemented a related program called the Wal-Mart Kids Recycling Challenge with the plastic bags. Additionally, Ms. Flowers discussed the effectiveness of using a pledge as a means to encourage elected officials and students to find pledges for reusable bags. Ms. Flowers will forward this information to Public Works.

Public Works will gather information on the Wal-Mart Kids Recycling Challenge as well as information from the Bay Area, Napa and Sonoma County plastic bag recyclers from Ms. Flowers. Additionally, Public Works will consult with their Public Relations Group regarding their Environmental Defenders' program school contest criteria, to assist in the development of contests for a program logo and reusable bag design. Public Works will draft outreach material and the school contest criteria in one month, as well as draft a set of "Fun Facts"

c. Open Discussion on Program Development

Ms. Flowers commented that as part of the anti-litter campaign, it would be beneficial to identify the schools located within those hotspots identified on the map.

IV. Next Steps

The next Public Education Subcommittee meeting will be held on December 16, 2008.