

MEETING NOTES
SINGLE USE BAG REDUCTION AND RECYCLING PROGRAM

Store Operations Subcommittee Meeting

Wednesday, November 5, 2008, 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, Hossam Banna, Nilda Gemeniano, Christine Frias, and Iwen Tseng with the County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works; Matthew Dodson with the California Grocers Association; Alina Morshidian with City of Glendale Department of Public Works; and Burt Kumagawa with County of Los Angeles Chief Executive Office. Those who attended via conference call were Stephen Joseph with Save the Plastic Bag coalition, and Christine Flowers with Keep California Beautiful.

II. Program Status

a. Checklists Received

In October, members of the subcommittees had agreed on calling the grocery stores to confirm receipt of the Program Resource Packet and checklist, and to encourage participation in the Program. After obtaining approval from Mr. Matthew Dodson of the California Grocers Association (CGA), Public Works began calling the 121 Category 1 stores within the unincorporated County areas during the week of October 20, 2008. Over the following two week period, staff had called all of the stores, and received eight additional completed store checklists. The total number of checklists received to date is eleven. Six out of the eight newly received checklists came from large chain supermarkets, and indicated that most of them had already incorporated many of the components identified in the checklist. For example, many large supermarkets currently award credits for each reusable bag used by customers, encourage customers to purchase reusable bags, and display signage to remind customers to bring their own bags. Two of the additional checklists received came from smaller stores who indicated that they do not currently sell reusable bags. For the stores' convenience Public Works is setting up an online checklist submittal feature, which will be made available on the Program website within the next few weeks.

b. Cities Participation

Public Works has been assisting cities in finding store information by providing resources such as the County of Los Angeles Department of Public Health Retail Food Inspection Program and Retail Plan Check Program, and the State Board of Licensed Pharmacies. Some cities plan to distribute the program resource packets to their stores as-is, while others plan to use parts of the packet to create their own. Public Works gave a Program presentation to the Pomona City Council on October 6, 2008, and invited the City to join the Program. The City's feedback was positive and the City plans to adopt a resolution to join the Program at their November 17, 2008, meeting. Additionally, the City of Burbank expressed interest in the Program.

Ms. Morshidian of the City of Glendale shared that she has been having difficulty compiling store information for the City. She has drafted an email with the store participation checklist and asked Mr. Dodson of the CGA and the Director of NACDS to send it out to their members. Mr. Dodson offered to help call the stores and corporate offices that the cities identify in their jurisdiction.

III. Program Development

a. Store updates

To further encourage stores to participate in the Program Public Works proposes to conduct store site visits by Public Works' staff. The store visits would provide opportunities to answer questions, encourage participation, and observe some of the Program components that the stores have already implemented, such as plastic bag recycling and reusable bag sales. The CGA expressed their concurrence with the store visits. Store visit procedures and a questionnaire are being drafted and will be distributed for stakeholder reviews, after which time the store site visits will commence.

The American Chemistry Council has made their plastic bag recycling toolkit available for distribution to stores. The CGA has also approved distributing the toolkit. This toolkit includes window posters, stickers and decals. Public Works will distribute the toolkits, at the discretion of each of the stores, while conducting the site visits.

b. Discussion on proposed contract components pertaining to Store Operations

Public Works proposes to develop a scope of work for a contract to assist in implementing some of the program components. The Subcommittee would set up the framework, and the contractor would facilitate the deliverables accordingly. Contractual activities may include producing a DVD for store personnel training and a short educational DVD for customers; developing a store awards program; reusable bag promotions and other educational outreach efforts; and researching paper bag manufacturing information; proposing a work plan; and researching information regarding the post-consumer recycled content of paper bags. The role of the contractor would be to supplement the Subcommittee's effort in implementing some of the Program elements. Ms. Flowers would like to review the scope of work for this contract, and assist in public education and outreach efforts. Public Works will also contact the American Forest and Paper Association to obtain information about the manufacturing of paper bags.

c. Open discussion on program development

To maintain consistency among subcommittee efforts, it was reiterated that the overall message of the Program is to promote reusable bags, reduce the consumption of single use bags, and conduct public outreach to discourage litter from single use bags.

Mr. Dodson stated that five of the corporate offices have received the Packets. He requested that Public Works attend the Local Government Relations meeting at 7:30 a.m., on Friday, November 7, 2008, in Pasadena to promote the Single Use Bag Program. Twenty corporate offices from Southern California will be attending this conference. This meeting will be held quarterly, and is not open to the public.

IV. Next Steps

Public Works will begin drafting a Scope of Work for the contract which is anticipated to commence in Fiscal Year 2009-10. The draft will be reviewed by stakeholders prior to the release of the Request for Proposals. In the interim Public Works will continue to develop outreach materials for the Program. The next Store Operations Subcommittee meeting will be held on December 16, 2008.