

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

**Public Education Subcommittee Meeting**

Tuesday, December 16, 2008, 10:00 a.m.

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

**I. Introductions**

The meeting was called to order at 10:04 a.m. Those in attendance were: Emiko Thompson, Nilda Gemeniano, Angie Nguyen, and Christine Frias with the County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works; Ritu Sehgal with the County of Los Angeles Internal Services Department; and Burt Kumagawa with the County of Los Angeles Chief Executive Office. Those who participated via conference call were Diana Dixon-Davis with 31st District PTSA; Vicky Limon with the Los Angeles County Office of Education; Josephine Miller with the City of Santa Monica; and Nick Morell with the Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts.

**II. Program Status**

a. Checklists Received

To date, nineteen stores submitted their completed checklists which revealed that many of the large stores already utilize recycling bins for plastic bags, as well as have reusable bags for sale. The checklists from the smaller stores indicate they do not sell reusable bags nor have any programs that motivate customers to recycle their plastic bags.

Ms. Dixon-Davis commented that buttons displaying environmental messages, to be worn by store personnel, would be costly for stores to purchase. However, if the County were to purchase a button maker and create the buttons, it would greatly help to promote the program.

Public Works will continue to compile checklists and provide updates.

b. Cities Participation

The City of Azusa sent resource packets to stores that provide plastic carryout bags within their jurisdiction. The City of Glendale electronically sent resource packets to the California Grocers Association and the National Association of Chain Drug Stores, who then sent it to their respective member stores within the City. The City received feedback from six Ralph's stores to date, and plan to follow up with the rest of the stores. The City of Hermosa Beach created a new committee to implement the program and advance participation by their local stores.

c. Website Update

The program website continues to be updated. Additional news articles are anticipated to be posted by the end of the week. A new link was added to the "Events" page directing users to reusable bag giveaway locations in conjunction with Heal the Bay's "A Day Without A Bag" event. Announcements about the

event were added to the "Getting Involved" page including the County's proclamation of the third Thursday of December each year as "A Day Without A Bag." A new link to the Plastic Grocery Bag Fact Sheet by Keep California Beautiful was also added to the "Resources" page, as well as a link to the Reusable Plastic Bag presentation by Roplast Industries. Additionally, a link to the At-Store Recycling Program of the California Integrated Waste Management Board was also added to the page. A "Legislative Updates" page is also under development to include updated Program-related legislation.

### **III. Program Development**

#### **a. Store Site Visits**

Two teams from Public Works conducted site visits to eight unincorporated area stores on December 8th and 9th. One of the stores visited, Trader Joe's, had an exceptionally prominent reusable bags promotion, with a wide range of aesthetically pleasing reusable bags on display at a highly visible location of the store. They also had a raffle program through which customers who brought their reusable bags could win \$10 off of their next store purchase.

The store visits also revealed a wide range of receptacle types used for plastic bag recycling, varying from basic cardboard boxes to more permanent structures. It was also noted that one of the stores does not offer any paper bags and uses only plastic carryout bags.

Most of the stores gladly accepted the outreach materials provided by the American Chemistry Council, which included bin signs and posters to promote plastic bag recycling.

#### **b. Components Pertaining to Public Education**

Public Works began drafting a tri-fold brochure to encourage the public to utilize reusable bags, to discourage the littering of single use bags, and information about recycling plastic bags. The draft brochure will be disseminated for stakeholder review prior to its use. Ms. Dixon-Davis suggested that local libraries be provided with bookmarks with environmental messages to motivate more people to recycle.

It was also suggested that Heal the Bay or other marine preservation representatives be contacted for insightful information regarding litter thrown into storm drains and waterways. Their campaign may provide a good model for a public education campaign for this program.

The County will be joining Heal the Bay to promote "A Day Without A Bag" on December 18th, and provide 5,000 "Brag About Your Bag<sup>®</sup>" reusable bags which will be distributed at various locations in Los Angeles County.

Ms. Thompson will be attending a community meeting in the unincorporated Florence-Firestone area on January 20, 2009, to discuss the program and to encourage the community to use reusable bags.

It was reported that Supervisor Molina's office had requested Public Works staff to join her office in visiting several elementary schools within her district to encourage students to use reusable bags and to talk about the litter impacts from single use bags.

c. Status of Proposed Contractual Services

A scope of work for consultant services is being drafted to assist the program in the following areas: increase store participation; produce and distribute outreach materials; and data collection and enhancement of the disposal reduction rate methodology. Upon completing the draft scope, Public Works will disseminate it for stakeholder review.

d. Open Discussion on Program Development

In coordination with Ms. Limon, Public Works was given permission to service a display table to discuss the program and distribute outreach materials at the upcoming Academic Decathlon Competition on January 31, 2009, and to encourage teenagers to use reusable bags and to reduce litter from single use bags.

**IV. Next Steps**

The next Working Group meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 21, 2009, at Public Works' Conference Room D.