

**May 21, 2008**

## **DEFINITION OF "LARGE SUPERMARKETS AND RETAIL STORES"**

### **Background**

As required by Alternative 5, the County Working Group is required to "define large supermarkets and retail stores. At a minimum the definition would include all stores required to comply with Assembly Bill 2449."

In addition, on January 22, 2008, the Board of Supervisors adopted a motion requesting the County Working Group to "Report back to the Board of Supervisors by July 1, 2008 on a plan for integrating convenience stores and other appropriate franchise stores whose cumulative square footage exceeds 10,000 square feet into the Single Use Bag Reduction and Recycling Program by July 1, 2009, consistent with the County's adopted goals."

Lastly, on February 6, 2008, the Board of Supervisors adopted a motion requesting the County Working Group to "evaluate other methods by which we may reduce the use of plastic carryout bags in smaller stores located in the unincorporated areas of the County. At a minimum, the County Working Group should evaluate instituting a standard prohibition on the use of plastic bags via the County's business licensing and conditional use permits."

### **Store Categories**

In response to these directions, staff has prepared the following three discrete categories of definitions for stores that may be incorporated now or in the future in the County's Single Use Bag Reduction and Recycling Program.

#### Category 1

Under AB 2449, "large supermarkets and retail stores" are as defined as stores that fall under either of the following two categories:

- Large Supermarket -- a full-line, self-service, retail store with gross annual sales of \$2 million or more and which sells a line of dry groceries, canned goods, or nonfood items and some perishable goods.
- Retail store -- has over 10,000 square feet of retail space that generates sales tax and has a licensed pharmacy.

#### Category 2

Defined as "convenience stores and other appropriate franchise stores whose cumulative square footage exceeds 10,000 square feet." The County Working Group is required to report back to the Board of Supervisors by July 1, 2008 on a plan for integrating these stores into the Program by July 1, 2009, consistent with the County's adopted goals.

#### Category 3

All stores that provide single use carryout plastic bags to the public, including small family owned neighborhood stores. The County Working Group is required to evaluate other methods to reduce the use of plastic carryout bags in smaller stores located in the unincorporated areas of the County, including instituting a standard prohibition on the use of plastic bags.

May 21, 2008

### Action Items to be Considered by County Working Group and Stakeholders

- ~~Staff recommends that the County Working Group adopt the definition as specified in AB 2449 for Category 1, which would be subject to the 30% and 65% bag reduction goals and all other aspects of the Single Use Bag Reduction and Recycling Program.~~
- The County has several options for incorporating Categories 2 and 3 into the Program, including requirements under conditional use permits, business licenses, County ordinance, or other mechanisms.
- **Staff seeks input regarding these options before moving forward**, especially relating to the questions identified below:

#### Questions to consider for Categories 2 and 3

- How will these stores be incorporated into the Single Use Bag Reduction and Recycling Program?
- What will be the reporting mechanism and methodology for these stores?
- Will at-store recycling be implemented at these stores, and if so, how?
- Should a per-bag fee be considered for these stores, and if so, how much?
- Should bags be banned or phased out at Category 3 stores?
- Should the Board of Supervisors use business licenses, conditional use permits, and/or County ordinance to implement bag recycling programs and/or mandates?

#### **Suggestions submitted:**

- Offering reduced business licensing fees or tax credits for smaller stores who voluntarily comply with minimum program levels developed for larger stores.
- Having stakeholders and industry groups for categories 1 and 2 initiate direct discussions about participation.
- Offer reusable bags to small retailers at a reduced price, free, or at cost, in order to help smaller stores compete in the reusable bag market.
- Add Category 2 stores to the Program as established, starting July 1, 2009.

May 21, 2008

## PROPOSED DISPOSAL REDUCTION RATE METHODOLOGY

### Background

As required by Alternative 5, the County Working Group is required to “establish the disposal rate measurement methodology to evaluate the success of the County goals. At a minimum, the methodology will measure the reduction in consumption of plastic bags, increased at-store recycling of plastic bags, and plastic bags recovered at recycling facilities, on a semi-annual basis, while fully protecting confidential industry information. The County shall establish a framework by which the data submitted is confirmed to be accurate and verifiable on a regular basis.”

On February 6, 2008, the Board of Supervisors also adopted a motion requesting the CEO and DPW “to report back within 60 days with a listing of stores in the unincorporated areas that will be subject to the County's plastic bag policy, and the methodology that will be used to monitor, track and evaluate the progress these stores are making in meeting our policy's goals.”

The County Goals are to reduce the disposal rate of plastic bags by:

- a. A minimum of 30%, using FY 2007-08 as the baseline, by July 1, 2010.
- b. A minimum of 65%, using FY 2007-08 as the baseline, by July 1, 2013.

### Proposed Disposal Reduction Rate Methodology

In response to these requirements, staff has developed the following proposed disposal reduction rate methodology, which includes the following three components:

- 1) the reduction in consumption of plastic carryout bags,
- 2) the total number of bags recycled at-stores and
- 3) total number of bags recycled via curbside recycling programs.

Disposal Reduction Rate =

$$\frac{(\text{Base Year Consumption}^1 - \text{Reporting Year Consumption}^2)}{\text{Base Year Consumption}} +$$

$$\frac{\text{Plastic Bags Recycled At Stores During Reporting Year}}{\text{Base Year Consumption}} +$$

$$\frac{\text{Plastic Bags Recycled via Curbside Collection Programs During Reporting Year}}{\text{Base Year Consumption}}$$

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<sup>1</sup> Base Year Consumption is the amount of plastic bags generated in fiscal year 2007-08, based on data reported to the California Integrated Waste Management Board as required by AB 2449.

<sup>2</sup> Reporting Year Consumption is the amount of plastic bags generated during a specified fiscal year, based on data reported to the California Integrated Waste Management Board as required by AB 2449.

**May 21, 2008**

**Example:**

*Base Year:* Large supermarkets and retail stores (Proposed Category 1) consumed 600 million plastic bags during the base year.

*Reporting Year:* Large supermarkets and retail stores (Proposed Category 1) consumed 400 million plastic bags, collected 100 million plastic bags at stores and recycled 1 million plastic bags via curbside collection program during the reporting year.

*Calculation:*

$$= \frac{(600M - 400M)}{600M} + \frac{100M}{600M} + \frac{1M}{600M}$$
$$= \frac{301M}{600M}$$
$$= 0.5017 \times 100$$
$$= \mathbf{50.2\%}$$

**Action Items to be Considered by County Working Group and Stakeholders**

- Any suggested revisions to the methodology proposed above?
- What framework should be used to confirm the data submitted is accurate and verifiable on a regular basis? Options include:
  - a manifest system
  - tipping fees
  - third-party verification
  - direct County verification
  - store-by-store auditing
  - random inspection
  - mailing/e-submittal by stores

**Suggestions submitted:**

A suggestion was made to incorporate plastic bag reuse into the rate methodology. There are several challenges to incorporating plastic bag reuse, including:

- Establishing a measurement base rate
- Establishing a reporting system that is accurate and verifiable
- Identifying jurisdictional authority
- Properly allocating reuse estimates
- Establishing an enforcement methodology

We continue to encourage suggestions for specific methods/formulas that would address the concerns above.

## STORE-SPECIFIC PROGRAM OPTIONS

### Background

As a component of the Single-Use Bag Reduction and Recycling Program, each large supermarket and retail store (as defined) is responsible for developing and implementing store-specific programs from a menu of options within each of the following three key categories ([numbered 1-3 below](#)). [Within each category, staff has identified ~~concepts~~ major action items](#) (shown below in **green**). Each store would be required to develop a program that addresses, at a minimum, each of the **green action items, by selecting one or more of the choices suggested for each action item.**

Due to the County's culturally diverse population, store-specific programs should be community-specific, focusing on the store's customer demographics, while still addressing Program goals. County staff will be available to assist stores in developing their programs and promoting them through the County's public education resources.

### 1. Retraining of Store Personnel (Management, Baggers, Clerks, etc.)

- Develop a staff training plan that highlights the negative impacts plastic bag litter has on the environment and supports the goals of the Program. Choices include:**
  - i. Plastic bag fact sheets
  - ii. Informational DVDs
  - iii. Employee workshops
  - iv. Incentives for participation
  - v. [Adjust training programs](#)
  
- Promote the purchase and use of reusable bags and encourage smart bagging techniques. Choices include:**
  - i. For each transaction, asking the customer if they brought their reusable bags today
  - ii. Encouraging customers to purchase reusable bags at stores
  - iii. Placing a sign at the store front reminding customers to bring their reusable bags
  - iv. Implementing smart bagging techniques, including:
    - 1. Eliminating unnecessary double-bagging
    - 2. Eliminating unnecessary bagging of single items or bulky items
  - v. For stores with a per bag discount, announcing to customers how much they've saved on their bill by bringing a reusable bag
  - vi. Increasing the variety of reusable bags offered for sale
  
- Encourage customers to recycle their bags at the store. Choices include:**
  - i. Placing plastic bag recycling bins in a visible, accessible location
  - ii. Incorporating signs that highlight the purpose of the bins

May 21, 2008

- iii. Incorporating messages in public education efforts (see #3 below) that encourage/remind residents to bring clean bags back to the store for recycling

## 2. Incentives To Reduce Single-Use Bag Consumption

- Establish a customer rewards program or otherwise encourage the use of reusable bags and at-store recycling. Choices include:
  - i. Each time customers bring a reusable bag and/or bring bags back to stores:
    - 1. Enter customers in a raffle;
    - 2. Provide club card reward/gift points (if applicable);
    - 3. Provide a small discount on purchases; [or](#)
    - 4. Donate profits from reusable bag sales/use/recycling revenue to charities and schools to support related causes (litter prevention, wildlife protection, etc.)
  - ii. Giving a free reusable bag to customers who spend a certain amount on groceries
- Establish financial incentives to reduce plastic bag usage. Choices include:
  - i. Providing a credit for each reusable bag used
  - ii. Charging a per-bag fee for each plastic bag provided to customers

## 3. Public Education/Awareness

- Within the store, choices include:
  - i. Sell reusable bags in multiple locations
  - ii. Make reusable bag displays more prominent, located near checkout
  - iii. Run PSAs on monitors at check-out stands, if applicable
  - iv. Display environmental message on shopping carts
  - v. Environmental awareness photo gallery/display in front of store
  - vi. Posters/banners in parking lots or at store front
  - vii. Environmental message on single-use paper and reusable bags
  - viii. Have employees wear button with environmental message
- Within the community, choices include:
  - i. Participate in reusable bag promotions
  - ii. Provide in-kind contributions at reusable bag events
  - iii. Inform the public about the program on the store's website
  - iv. Sponsor school-based education programs
  - v. Create a kids' coloring contest that emphasizes recycling plastic bags and using reusable shopping bags

**May 21, 2008**

**Environmental Message**

- i. Imprint on each distributed plastic carryout bag an environmental message describing the negative impacts littered plastic carryout bags have on the environment and wildlife, and the need to use reusable bags

**Action Items to be Considered by County Working Group and Stakeholders**

- Should additional programs or options be added to the list above?
- Which options should be incorporated as minimum criteria for participation?
- What mechanism should be used for stores to get input from the County?
- How can we maximize store participation?

May 21, 2008

## PROPOSED ENVIRONMENTAL MESSAGE

### Background

On January 22, 2008, the Board of Supervisors adopted a motion requesting the County Working Group to develop a public education campaign and an environmental awareness message to be imprinted on each plastic carryout bag distributed by large supermarkets and retail stores. The public education efforts and ongoing communication will need to describe the negative impacts littered plastic carryout bags have on the environment and wildlife, and the need to use reusable bags. The educational efforts will be made through outreach events, utilization of the media, and the Internet.

Each large supermarket and retail store (as defined) is required to incorporate the environmental awareness message as a component of the Single-Use Bag Reduction and Recycling Program. The environmental message would strive to remind consumers of the negative impacts of plastic bags and that reusable bags are a better alternative and a great way to reduce the number of plastic bags used. The environmental message should be direct, while standing out from other messages that may already be imprinted plastic bags, and could be structured to incorporate two aspects: one attention-getting, the second being more informative.

The following environmental messages<sup>\*</sup> were suggested for consideration and to spark additional discussion and ideas:

### First sentence:

- Plastics Last Forever.
- Do You Really Need This Plastic Bag?
- Kick The Plastic.
- Do Your Part. Recycle This Bag.
- Reduce. Reuse. Recycle.
- It's not just a bag issue. It's a BIG issue.
- Reduce Litter

### Second Sentence: *(the following may be used in combination with the 1st sentence)*

- Protect The Environment By Using Reusable Bags.
- Reduce Litter and Impacts to Wildlife.
- Bring A Reusable Bag Next Time.
- Please Recycle This Bag

There are a number of ways in which County staff will explore imprinting of an environmental message on plastic bags, including through Working Group participation, by County ordinance, and through State legislation. County staff will research any legal and technical limitations that could apply to the County's environmental message.

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<sup>\*</sup> [The phrases "Saving the world, 1 bag at a time" and "BYOB: Bring your own bag" are registered trademarks.](#)

**May 21, 2008**

**Action Items to be Considered by County Working Group and Stakeholders**

- Preferences and/or additional suggestions for messages?
- Ideas for making the message prominent and effective?
- Ideas for selection, including a competition?

**Suggestions submitted:**

- Conduct a competition with local schools to select the best environmental message
- [Allowing for a rotating environmental message rather than selecting one](#)
- [Allowing industry to select from a menu of potential messages, which can be rotated](#)

## PUBLIC EDUCATION EFFORTS

### Background

As a component of Alternative 5, the County Working Group is required to:

- Develop public educational materials that promote reusable bags and at-store recycling with a consistent message
- Work with County departmental recycling coordinators to ensure distribution of promotional materials to employees and at facilities, events, or other appropriate opportunities
- Communicate and collaborate with the 88 Cities in Los Angeles County and local Council of Governments to create a Countywide coordinated and consistent anti-litter campaign
- Purchase reusable bags for large-scale giveaways to promote consumer use of reusable bags.

In order to increase awareness of this issue in an area that is already saturated with other recycling messages, the County's public education efforts must be informative, engaging, and community-specific. They must also address the diversity of cultures and languages of Los Angeles County residents. Below are suggested action items that may be considered by the County Working Group in implementing the educational components of the Program.

### Public Education Campaign

#### 1. Countywide public education campaign

- Develop branding, which includes an environmental slogan and logo, that can be applied to various media and incorporated into educational and outreach materials. County staff will also evaluate existing public education materials, such as those developed by the American Chemistry Council ([www.PlasticBagRecycling.org](http://www.PlasticBagRecycling.org)), as a cost-efficient alternative to independently developing creative materials.
- Develop a public education plan that focuses on children and schools. This could include:
  - i. Creating a Program mascot to appear at school assemblies and community events
  - ii. Developing an educational, interactive presentation that can be shown during school assemblies
  - iii. Holding coloring contests in partnership with local supermarkets
  - iv. Holding artwork/essay contests for grade-school children, where winners (along with their teachers) are honored by the Board of Supervisors
  - v. Developing an illustrated activity book that encourages families to reduce their plastic bag usage and use reusable bags instead
  - vi. Develop environmental awareness curriculum and programs for public schools

**May 21, 2008**

- Raise awareness among consumers of the impacts plastic bags have on the environment and encourage usage of reusable bags. This could include:
  - i. Posters to hang in and at front of stores
  - ii. Banners to hang in store parking lots and throughout major streets
  - iii. Billboards to place along major streets and on buses
  - iv. Advertisements to place in local newspapers and magazines
  - v. Advertisements to place in bus shelters
  - vi. Public service announcements/commercials to air on local television networks and radio stations
  - vii. Press releases to send to local media outlets
  - viii. Brochures/handouts to distribute at stores and public outreach events
  - ix. Decals that consumers can hang/stick in their vehicles

## **2. Reusable bag promotions**

- Sponsor plastic bag collection events where consumers can exchange a certain number of unwanted plastic bags for a reusable bag.
- Distribute free reusable bags and educational material at environmental outreach events. [For example, the County participates in dozens of events countywide each year to promote environmental awareness.](#)

## **Website**

County staff has developed a dedicated website for the Single-Use Bag Reduction and Recycling Program. The website will be designed to serve as a convenient, valuable and comprehensive resource that raises awareness of the necessity of reusable bags, provides information regarding the environmental impacts of plastic bag litter, and discusses the benefits of using reusable bags in a manner that is user-friendly and visually engaging. The website will include information about upcoming stakeholder meetings, draft working documents, news articles, [upcoming environmental awareness events](#), and other pertinent information. County staff has added all stakeholders to an email listserve that will coordinate communication between meetings, which any interested stakeholder can sign up for through the website.

## **Action Items to be Considered by County Working Group and Stakeholders**

- Any additional ideas regarding public outreach and education?
- Additional suggestions regarding the content and design of the website?
- Additional suggestions for promoting and distributing reusable bags?
- Additional ideas for soliciting feedback regarding the Program?

## **Suggestions submitted:**

- [Designation of “no plastic bags” day Countywide one day each month \(or week\)](#)
- [Develop PSA for local cable stations](#)

**May 21, 2008**

## **STORE RECOGNITION AND MINIMUM PARTICIPATION LEVELS**

### **Background**

As required by Alternative 5, the County Working Group is required to “create a program to recognize large supermarkets and retail stores who have shown a commitment to participating in the Bag Reduction and Recycling Program.”

In addition, the County Working Group is required to develop the framework for the store-specific programs. This framework “would establish minimum participation expectations, including participation levels and minimum program implementation at each store. In order to encourage participation by individual stores and expand the Bag Reduction and Recycling Program’s effectiveness, minimum participation expectations would be adjusted annually.”

### **Proposed Minimum Participation Levels and Store Recognition Program**

In response to these requirements, staff has developed the following proposed recognition plan which, in addition to stores, could also recognize other businesses, individuals, educators, organizations, and local governments who have made significant advances in promoting the adoption of reusable bags, increasing recycling of plastic bags, and reducing the use of plastic carryout bags.

As part of its recognition efforts, the County of Los Angeles will investigate the feasibility of highlighting outstanding contributors with an award, which could be presented by the Board of Supervisors. Recognizing a variety of public and private contributions would help reinforce the idea that successfully reducing the use of plastic bags is a collective effort that must be addressed by different sectors of society in order to change consumer behavior toward single-use products.

Nominees could be promoted through local media, including the County’s Single-Use Bag Reduction and Recycling Program website, and award recipients could be honored by the Board of Supervisors. Below are suggested categories that may be considered by the County Working Group in implementing the Plastic Bag Recognition Plan.

### **Large Supermarkets/Retail Stores** (as defined)

Nominees would be evaluated based on their level of participation, creativity, largest reduction in plastic bag usage, and/or other categories. Participation could be measured according to the number of options implemented as part of the store-specific recycling/outreach program (see draft table below). The awardees would be selected by the County working group.

### **Educators**

Educators may be nominated through a brief essay explaining how the educator has demonstrated exemplary leadership in recycling and reducing plastic bag usage. The awardees would be selected by the County working group.

May 21, 2008

**Businesses/Individuals**

Businesses and individuals may be nominated by other through a brief application explaining how they have demonstrated outstanding leadership in recycling and reducing the amount of plastic bags consumed by the public either through point-of-sales or by raising awareness among consumers of the impact plastic bags have on the environment. The awardees would be selected by the County working group.

**Minimum Participation Levels and One Option for Recognition**

Below is a table that identifies the various categories of store-specific programs that could be considered minimum levels of participation (e.g. Bronze) or exceptional levels of participation (e.g. Gold). Feedback regarding this table and other suggestions are encouraged.

MENU OF OPTIONS	LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION		
	Gold Store	Silver Store	Bronze Store
<b><i>Retraining of Supermarket Staff (management, baggers, clerks, etc.)</i></b>			
Develop a staff training plan that: a) Highlights the negative impacts of plastic bag litter b) Supports Program goals	3 or more	2	2
Promote the purchase/use of reusable bags and encourage smart bagging techniques	3 or more	2	1
Encourage customers to recycle bags at store	3 or more	2	1
<b><i>Incentives for Residents to: (a) use reusable bags, (b) bring plastic bags back to the store for recycling, etc.</i></b>			
Establish customer rewards program	2 or more	1	1
Establish financial incentives	2 or more	2	1
<b><i>Public Education / Awareness</i></b>			
Promote reusable bag usage and plastic bag recycling within the store	3 or more	2	1
Promote reusable bag usage and plastic bag recycling within the community	3 or more	2	1

**Suggestions submitted:**

- [Have County Board of Supervisors provide Certificates of Recognition to all "Gold" level stores.](#)

May 21, 2008

## PLASTIC BAG LITTER HOT SPOTS AND LITTER PREVENTION PROGRAM

### Background

As required by Alternative 5, the County Working Group is required to “identify ‘hot spots’ where plastic bag litter is acute, based on existing studies, and establish additional litter prevention programs (including best management practices and a framework for measuring litter reduction in these hot spots).”

### Strategies for Identifying Litter “Hot Spots”

Identify “hot spots” in County unincorporated areas with a high concentration of plastic bag litter and develop a map showing these “hot spots”

- Use City of Los Angeles Methodology on High Trash Generation Areas as basis of methodology.
- Work with various agencies and parties to develop “hot spot” data based on information such as, but not limited to, the following:
  - Catch basin/storm drain locations
  - Trash or plastic bag quantities collected from different clean up points
  - Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) data
  - [Solid waste collection infrastructure, including trash bins, collection trucks, and facilities that don't implement “total containment”](#)
- Develop map of plastic bag litter “hot spots.”
- Track TMDL data from watershed management program to measure trash and plastic bag collected at or near hotspots.

### Implementing Litter Prevention Programs

Implement additional litter prevention programs (including best management practices) and a framework for measuring litter reduction.

- Expand public education and outreach on plastic bag recycling and reuse.
- Incorporate plastic bags into litter prevention programs existing programs, such as:
  - Illegal dumping prevention program
  - Curbside recycling program
  - HHWE/E-Waste collection program
  - Permanent waste collection sites (e.g. AVECC)
  - Waste tire collection events
  - Free dump day events
  - RMDZ program for market development
  - Store recycling and reuse programs for plastic bags
  - Other waste reduction and diversion programs
- [Additional bag collection stations at places like CRV centers, schools, public facilities, etc.](#)
- [Incorporate anti-litter public educational programs at stores](#)

**May 21, 2008**

## **MAXIMIZE RECYCLED CONTENT OF ALL BAGS AND PROMOTE BAG RECYCLING MARKETS**

### **Background:**

As required by Alternative 5, the County Working Group is required to “develop strategies to reduce the consumption and disposal and increase the recycling of **all** single use bags and maximize the post-consumer recycled content of all bags provided to the public in order to help develop markets for recyclable materials and decrease use of raw materials.” In addition, the Working Group must “work with County departments and facilities to phase out the purchase and use of single use plastic bags, and maximize the recycled content of paper bags, meeting a minimum 40 percent recycled content.”

### **Strategies**

In order to achieve these objectives, a variety of strategies may be employed. Staff has developed the following strategies for consideration by the County Working Group and Stakeholders.

- Development of markets for single-use paper and plastic bags recycled in unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County
  - Provide information and incentives to manufacturers and stores for maximizing their use of recycled content bags
  - Establish incentive programs to foster development of industries that would use collected single-use plastic and paper bags in their productions and operations (e.g. using the RMDZ Program)
- Maximization of the post-consumer recycled content of single-use paper bags in Los Angeles County to decrease use of raw materials
  - Promulgate legislation and laws that would require making of single-use paper bags with post consumer recycled content.
  - Require procurement of single-use paper bags made of post consumer recycled contents in government and other large scale procurement programs.
  - Educate manufacturers and producers on use of single-use plastic bags for manufacturing products with post consumer recycled content.

In addition, Manufacturer and Trade Association Responsibilities include “work[ing] with large supermarkets and retail stores to promote the use of at least 40 percent post-consumer recycled content paper bags by January 1, 2009.”