

MEETING NOTES
SINGLE USE BAG REDUCTION AND RECYCLING PROGRAM

Working Group Meeting

Wednesday, December 16, 2009, 3:15 p.m.

County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works, Alhambra Room

I. Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 3:15 pm. Mr. Coby Skye of Public Works welcomed the Working Group, and introductions were made among attendees and phone participants.

Those in attendance included: Coby Skye, Nilda Gemeniano, Luke Mitchell, and Rogelio Gamiño with County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works; Dorothea Park and Burt Kumagawa with County of Los Angeles Chief Executive Office; Lars Clutterham with the City of Downey's Green Task Force, Hillary Gordon with Sierra Club, Marivic Sabillo with City of Los Angeles, Rick Crandall with Albertsons, and Pat Smith with Earth Share California. Those in attendance via conference call were: Sonia Diaz with Heal the Bay, Kimberly Nillson representing the cities of Malibu, Agoura, and Bell Gardens, Brian Early with Californians Against Waste, Sherri McCarthy with American Chemistry Council, Susan Fernandez with the California Film Extruders and Converters Association, Nick Morell with Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County, Amy Hammes, and Marty Sunez.

II. News and Updates

a) Recent Articles

Mr. Mitchell reported on recent news and articles relating to single use bags:

- Through the Brag About Your Bag[®] promotional campaign, customers shopping at participating grocery stores within Los Angeles County can trade in five plastic bags for a free reusable bag, and sign up to win lunch with Luke Walton of the Los Angeles Lakers or a free trip to Miami, Florida to attend a taping of Sabado Gigante.
- The kickoff of the second phase of Los Angeles County Supervisor Gloria Molina's "A Green Bag for a Clean Earth" campaign in the unincorporated area of Valinda took place at Baldwin Academy on October 8, 2009.
- Target announced plans to give customers a 5-cent discount for every reusable bag used to pack purchases.

- CVS will give customers \$1 back on their CVS card for every 4 purchases they do not carry out in single use bags.
- Holland & Barrett is the first retailer in the United Kingdom to ban plastic bags from all its stores.
- Plastic bag imports are banned from entering Yangon, Myanmar and biodegradable bags face new regulations requiring an environmental permit. Sort separation efforts are underway to recover plastic waste to help in the production of energy.

The unanimous vote at a recent council meeting of the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, in Alberta, Canada has banned both plastic and paper single use shopping bags at most retailers.

Florida's Department of Environmental Protection has called for a retail bag regulation.

The City of San Jose has enacted the country's strictest ban on single use bags. The move to ban the bags started after Councilman Kansen Chu took office in June 2007. The ban will go into effect in 2011 after developing an environmental impact report.

b) Environmental Impact Report Update

Mr. Skye 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 scoping meetings were held throughout Los Angeles County in each of the Supervisorial Districts. A stakeholder meeting for public agencies was held at the Public Works headquarters. The purpose of the meeting was to obtain feedback about the EIR currently under development. The scoping period ends on January 4, 2010. All comments are to be directed to Coby Skye.

The County anticipates the completion of the draft EIR by late March or early April. Those already signed up to receive the Program electronic newsletter will be among the first to receive information about the draft EIR and public meetings held in concert with the release of the draft EIR.

III. **Outreach Activities**

a) Community Outreach Events

Ms. Gemeniano reported that Public Works staff distributed reusable bags with Program brochures at various community events throughout the County.

A total of nearly 800 bags were given away at the Los Angeles County Fair for the 5 days attended in September.

Public Works' Brag About Your Bag[®] crew presented a skit on the 4 R's at the launch event of the second phase of Supervisor Gloria Molina's "A Green Bag for a Clean Earth" reusable bag campaign. The skit was performed at assemblies held at elementary schools located in the Valinda unincorporated community during the month of October.

On October 11, 2009, 150 Brag bags were distributed at County Beaches and Harbor's "Discover Marina del Rey" event. On October 17, 2009, 200 bags were distributed at Monterey Park's Green Festival. And on October 24, 2009, approximately 150 bags were given away at Public Works' Get Hip Go Green event in Monrovia.

b) Brag About Your Bag[®] Campaign

Press Conference

The Brag About Your Bag[®] Campaign, which encouraged Los Angeles County residents to turn in their plastic bags to receive free reusable bags, was launched at the Downtown Los Angeles Civic Center on November 10, where Luke Walton of the Los Angeles Lakers helped to have the attendees commit to reducing plastic bag litter. Besides the Lakers spokesperson, State Assembly member Mike Davis, County Supervisors Don Knabe and Zev Yaroslavsky, and Public Works Director Gail Farber also addressed the audience.

Bag Exchange Events

From preliminary reports, about 57 cities in the County participated in the campaign. Many posted ads and flyers around their city and in city printed literature. Some cities featured campaign messages through their public access/city cable channel and others donated bags or worked event booths at campaign events in their city. Campaign events were held at 49 locations of the following participating stores: Albertsons, Buy Low, Food 4 Less, How's Market, Jax Market, Northgate Market, Ralphs, Stater Brothers, Valu Plus, Wal-Mart, Whole Foods Market, and Wolfe's Market. Campaign events were also held at 10 city facilities and other community events, such as the Inglewood Gateway, Bell Holiday Parade and Festival, Huntington Park Tree Lighting, UCLA vs. USC Football game, a Farmer's market in the unincorporated La Puente area, and Los Angeles City College's Mission campus. A total of 45,500 reusable bags were distributed, which includes 7,500 USC-branded reusable bags and 6,750 bags distributed by Heal the Bay, L.A. County

Supervisory District 2, SELAC, Heart & Soul Community Group, and the Eastmont Community Group.

Plastic Bag Ball

Approximately 30,000 plastic bags have been collected so far for recycling. Collected plastic bags are being gathered together to form a plastic bag ball structure, which is anticipated to break the current Guinness World Record held by Spain of approximately 17,700 bags.

c) Website Updates

Mr. Mitchell provided a report on the most recent website updates.

- On the “Events” page, a link was added to the Brag About Your Bag[®] Campaign event schedule.
- On the “Resources” page, links were added to the American Chemistry Council’s plastic bag recycling outreach webpages.
- Keep California Beautiful “Got Your Bags” graphic is available through the “Plastic Bag Recycling” page.
- Keep California Beautiful’s Tip Sheet, which discusses the 3R’s about single use bags can be found through the “Getting Involved” page.
- The environmental documents which support plastic bag ordinances in the County are available on the newly developed “Environmental Documents” page and through links on the Home page, “Resources” and “Getting Involved” pages.

Mr. Skye added that there was a press release sent out yesterday that discussed the plastic bag ball, which immediately received a tremendous amount of interest from the media. Tomorrow, there will be a campaign event held at a grocery store in Long Beach, from where KTLA’s Good Morning America will be televising. Many campaign events will be occurring tomorrow throughout the County.

IV. Update on Expanded Polystyrene Efforts

Mr. Skye reported on efforts to reduce expanded polystyrene (EPS) food containers from County facilities/operations.

Staff continues to work with County departments to obtain their usage and expected time frame for switching to alternative products. A recommendation of a transition period within 60 days will be presented to the County Board of

Supervisors. Plans are being developed to implement a recycling program at certain departments.

The Board letter and supporting documents will be released to Program stakeholders for preliminary comments. Electronic notification will be sent after the Board documents have been finalized to be presented to the Board.

V. Next Steps

Excitement is mounting from all the campaign efforts and partnerships with industry, stores, environmental groups, reusable bag companies, and the Los Angeles Lakers. Further details will be provided at the next stakeholder meeting in January.