

MEETING NOTES
SINGLE USE BAG REDUCTION AND RECYCLING PROGRAM

Technical Advisory Subcommittee Meeting

Wednesday, February 18, 2009, 11:00 am

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

I. Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 11:00 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 attended via conference call were: Jennifer Forkish with the American Chemistry Council; Nick Morell with the Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts; Darrell Costello with Roplast Industries; and Ruben Morla with the California Verde Magazine.

II. Program Status and Development

a. Store Site Visits

Ms. Nguyen provided an update on the checklists received.

Public Works visited 38 stores to date of which 20 qualified as Category 1 stores, and 18 were either no longer in business, corporate offices, changed to other types of businesses, or too small to qualify as Category 1 stores.

The checklists continue to indicate that most of the large stores have recycling bins for plastic bags, and about half of the stores sell reusable bags. One manager of a small store in West Covina is working with his corporate office to provide reusable bags for their customers as well as incentives to decrease consumption of plastic bags.

b. Community Outreach

Ms. Thompson attended the Florence-Firestone Community Enhancement Team meeting on January 27, 2009, and gave a Program presentation. Some of the comments made by community members regarding single-use bags included the following:

- Not many people are aware that plastic bags can be recycled. More outreach materials, such as signs and recycling bins, should be placed at stores.
- Stores should have incentives to encourage consumers to bring their reusable bags such as providing discounts on groceries.
- Littering commonly occurs after community events. Anti-litter messages should be disseminated at community events.

c. Cities Participation

Ms. Gemeniano provided an update on cities participation.

The City of Azusa gave away 300 reusable bags at the opening of a local Fresh & Easy supermarket on February 11, 2009. They plan to conduct other reusable bag giveaways throughout the year. The City promotes reusable bags in their newsletters and bus shelter panels. Local supermarkets sell reusable bags and have recycling bins for plastic bags.

The City of Hermosa Beach plans to include Program information in their newsletter, and conduct bag giveaways. A committee comprised of residents will be established to implement the Program.

The city participation table has been updated and will be available on the Program website.

d. Website Update

Ms. Frias provided an update on the program website. Since the last Working Group meeting in January, four new articles were posted, as well as legislative updates.

Additionally, the 2009 guidelines and application for the County of Los Angeles Green Leadership Award were posted on the Public Works' Environmental Programs Division website, 888CleanLA.com.

e. Store Recycling Programs

Ms. Frias reported that some of the stores visited were not aware of AB2449, and did not have signage nor bins for recycling plastic bags. Ms. Frias requested input from the subcommittee on enhancing at-store recycling programs particularly in the following areas: better understanding the overall operations of plastic bags recycling programs at stores; identifying various products, other than outdoor furniture, that can be manufactured from recycled plastic bags; and the daily quantities of plastic bags recycled through at-store programs.

f. Disposal Reduction Rate Methodology

Ms. Thompson discussed the three components of the disposal reduction rate methodology: 1) reduction in consumption of plastic carryout bags; 2) total number of plastic bags recycled at stores; and 3) the total number of plastic bags recycled via curbside recycling programs.

Ms. Gemeniano reported receiving plastic bag recycling information from some of the stores visited in the unincorporated areas, and by working with the California Grocers Association. Through coordination with the American Chemistry Council, a letter was also received from the Plastic Recycling Corporation of California reporting the total aggregate quantity of plastic bags recycled during 2007 from residential curbside recycling programs in the County.

The 2007 At-Store Recycling Reports from the California Integrated Waste Management Board were also received. The report contains plastic bag consumption and recycling data from Category 1 stores in the County from July 1, 2007 to December 31, 2007.

g. Brochure Update

Ms. Thompson described the following updates on the Program brochure were included as requested by stakeholders:

- The phrase, "Set a Good Example for your Community" was added to the front cover. On the back cover, "Plastic Bag Tips" was changed to "Single Use Bag Tips."
- The photo of the cow and the photo of the plastic bag floating in the ocean, were replaced with photos of plastic bags near a catch basin, and a shopper loading reusable bags into a vehicle.

The brochure will be posted on the Program website.

III. Next Steps

The next Working Group meeting will be held at the Public Works headquarters, Conference Room D, on Wednesday, March 18, 2009, at 2:00 pm.