

**SINGLE-USE BAG REDUCTION AND RECYCLING PROGRAM
WORKING GROUP MEETING**

Minutes of May 21, 2008

Department of Public Works Headquarters
900 S. Fremont Ave, Alhambra, CA 91803
Executive Conference Room 12th Floor

I. Introductions

Meeting was called to order by Mr. Coby Skye at 2:10 p.m. Mr. Skye welcomed the Working Group, and confirmed that all participants (including phone participants) had received an informational e-mail that included the meeting agenda and the documents that would be reviewed during the meeting. Each participant introduced themselves to the group.

II. Plastic Bag News and Updates

Mr. Skye noted that the plastic bag issue continues to be in global as well as local news, reflecting the public's desire to address the issue. Mr. Skye updated the Working Group that as of the meeting date eight cities have joined the County's Single-Use Bag Reduction and Recycling Program, while several others continue to express interest in the Program. Mr. Skye provided an update on plastic bag related legislation, Assembly Member Levine's Assembly Bill (AB 2058) has now two additional co-authors, Assembly Members Davis and Brownley. AB 2058 is in the Appropriations Committee for review, and the latest version of AB 2058 is included in the packets distributed to Working Group members. These amendments address both plastic and paper bags, including a \$0.25 fee that applies to both plastic and paper bags which makes this bill the most aggressive towards the issue.

Mr. Skye reminded stakeholders that they are the ambassadors for this Program and encouraged them to share information with cities and other stakeholders to encourage them to participate as well.

Action Items

- Mr. Skye indicated that Working Group participants would be informed of any amendments officially incorporated into AB 2058, and other relevant news and updates will be sent to everyone on the stakeholder list.
- DPW staff will also maintain a comprehensive list of all the cities that have joined the Program and regularly update the Working Group.

III. Working Group Subcommittees

Staff introduced a new concept to the Working Group for discussion, the structuring of subcommittees. Taking into consideration that various Stakeholders have different interest in the Plastic Bag issue, staff has identified three main issues that would enhance the Working group efforts as subcommittees: store operations, public education and technical advisory. A volunteer list will be sent to all stakeholders seeking participation in their area of interest. For example, there are members who are involved with the PTA in their specific school district with certain expertise that can be helpful to the public education subcommittee. The subcommittees will focus more closely on particular areas of interest and finalize the specific deliverables before July 1st. Meeting for the subcommittees will be in between stake holder meetings, and these groups are expected to last about four years after the program has been implemented.

Action Items

- Staff will send out a request for volunteers for the subcommittees, seeking participation from all stakeholders.

IV. Review of Deliverables

Definition of "Large Supermarkets and Retail Stores"

Mr. Skye informed the working group that the three categories of stores have been tentatively approved and currently staff is working to identify the stores that fit into the different categories.

- Category 1 stores would be large supermarkets and retail stores as defined by AB 2449.
- Category 2 stores would include convenience stores and other franchise stores whose cumulative square footage exceeds 10,000 feet.
- Category 3 stores encompass all other grocery and retail stores that provide plastic carryout bags to the public, including small family owned neighborhood stores.

Staff is working to compile the different databases it has throughout the county. A sample was provided to the stakeholders for review. County staff anticipates finalizing their database for Category 2 and 3 stores in the County unincorporated area within a month. Based on feedback received, staff recommended phasing in stores, starting with category 2 stores and then category 3 stores. Per the Board of Supervisors' direction, category 2 stores will be incorporated into the Program by July 2009.

Action Items

- Staff will be moving forward with the recommendation of the definitions of the categories and identifying stores in the County that fall under each category.

Reporting and Measurement Methodology

Catherine Browne asked what variables will be used to determine the disposal rate, and whether it take into consideration increased consumption, changes in demographics, population, and economic fluctuations. Staff responded that the County has been working on a formula that will incorporate source reduction, at store recycling and other measurable recycling in calculating the rate so the reporting and measurement methodology is as accurate as possible, as directed by the board of Supervisors. Other factors may also be considered in the methodology. Staff also specified that although fine tuning is needed in the formula, a 3% margin of error has already been included to account for fluctuation in the variables used for data collection.

Mr. Alva added that volunteers who wish to assist in fine tuning the methodology can do so by participating in the Technical Advisory Subcommittee where specifics will be discussed and examine in greater detail. Mr. Alva stated a vetting of deliverables such as the methodology is the reason why volunteers from the Working Group are needed in the subcommittees.

Ms. Angela Mazzie recommended staff look into a pool of resources through the local higher education institutions. Approaching local Universities such as UCLA and Cal. State L.A. may provide valuable research by academics and graduate students. Mr. Alva informed the Working Group that within the last three weeks the Department of Public Works has been contacted by Universities to provide graduate students research oriented projects. Staff is currently looking to process the paperwork to bring them aboard. Andrea Harbin volunteered to participate in the Public Education Subcommittee.

Store Specific Program Options

Mr. Skye reiterated the importance and value of this aspect of the Program to the Working Group. The Store Specific Program Options provides stores with a lot of flexibility in participating in the Program. Mr. Skye discussed the menu of options for the stores to select from to implement the Program according to their specific needs. These options include three broad categories each with subcategories. The broad category includes; retrain store personnel, provide incentives to customers to encourage reduction and public education and awareness. The County would like for the stores to select a subcategory from each category to implement at their stores. Mr. Skye asked that additional suggestions or comments on the recommendations be submitted to the staff.

Samantha Martinez volunteered for the Store Operation Subcommittee. Ms. Martinez also noted that the Grocer Association will be encouraging its members to

participate in the program. Mr. Alva suggested that a joint letter on behalf of the County and the Grocers Association be sent to members of the Grocers Association explaining the program, noting the expectations of the Program and request their participation in the program. Ms. Martinez was agreeable to the suggestion.

Action Items

- Additional suggestions or comments on the Store Specific Program Options be submitted to staff.
- A joint letter on behalf of the County of Los Angeles and the Grocers Association be sent to members of the Grocers Association explaining the program and requesting their participation.

Environmental Awareness Message

Mr. Skye informed the working group that certain slogans are registered trademarks and therefore cannot be used for the Environmental Awareness Message; including “Saving the world one bag at a time” and “Bring your own Bag or BYOB”. Mr. Skye shared with the stakeholders a list of suggested slogans compiled to date. Mr. Alva has suggested that the public education subcommittee be responsible for clearing the messages used or proposed. Another suggestion as a result of the stakeholder meetings is the use of rotating messages, giving stores the flexibility to select what message they want to use.

Public Education Efforts and Ongoing Communication

Mr. Skye directed the Working Group to the copies of the website that is currently being developed by the County. Once the Working Group is comfortable with the draft, the County will publish and begin to promote the website. Catherine Browne expressed concerns regarding the accuracy and objectivity of the information on the website. Mr. Alva clarified the information on the draft website was based substantially on the Plastic Bag staff report developed in August 2007, which was thoroughly researched and cited, and also noted that the website has only been shared with the Working Group in order to solicit comments. Mr. Alva requested that suggestions or articles that stakeholders would like to have the Working Group review be submitted to staff.

Tim Shestek of the American Chemistry Council requested that the web site be more consumer friendly. As an example Mr. Shestek asked that the website include the local recycling centers for plastic bags and to review all articles thoroughly to make the site more objective. Mr. Alva stated that Industry comments were greatly appreciated and encouraged as the County’s intention is to have all concerns addressed. Mr. Alva reiterated the importance of the Public Education Subcommittee in reviewing the news articles and website and most importantly ensuring that there is ample representation in the decision making process. Mr. Skye reiterated that the web site is a preliminary draft in a PDF file to make sure that it does not leak out to the public without first having been vetted by Working Group for approval.

Mr. Skye also mentioned the concept of a day without a bag as a monthly activity as part of the public education effort, in the last meeting participants mentioned a day without single use bags, similar to a program currently promoted in Hong Kong. This idea would further promote the use of reusable bags.

Store Participation and Recognition

Staff has developed a recommendation to recognize those stores that voluntarily participate in the program, with additional recognition for those stores that do an outstanding job participating. In addition to recognizing stores, staff would like to recognize other stakeholders that are making the program a success such as educators, individuals and other businesses. Input on how to improve this program is requested from stakeholders.

Hot Spots and Anti-Littering Campaign

Mr. Skye discussed the importance of identifying litter hot spots and how litter is a driving force in developing the Program. In developing litter information, the County of Los Angeles will be using a similar methodology to that of the City of Los Angeles, correlating the amount of plastic bag litter and the amount of trash recovered at catch basins. Mr. Skye explained the maps displayed in the room are color coded to show a visual of the data collected to date, making litter hot spots easier to identify.

There are three maps, one showing land use designations which have certain correlations to litter, while the other two show the quantity of debris caught in the catch basins Countywide as well as the unincorporated areas, respectively. Catherine Browne inquired if the litter maps are specific to plastic bags or just litter? Mr. Alva noted these show catch basins with higher concentrations of litter, and explained how there is a strong correlation between the amount of trash collected at these catch basins and plastic bag litter. The Working Group discussed other components that may be correlated to plastic bag litter, such as high traffic, weather conditions, and population. Ms. Browne suggested the best way to combat single use plastic bag litter was to educate the public on recycling them, and to have residents place bags in bags and recycle them at curbside. Mr. Alva added that instead of placing those bags at curbside recycling bins the public be encouraged to take them to the supermarket recycling stations, which reduces the likelihood of contamination and increases the value of the collected bags.

Mr. Skye brought up another suggestion received, to include additional collection bins for plastic bags at high traffic locations and at schools to teach children to recycle and to reinforce public education efforts.

Recycled Content and Recycling Markets for All Bags

Mr. Skye discussed the Program goal of maximizing the recycled content of all bags, including paper bags, and promoting recycling markets for these materials. Suggestions were made to educate consumers and industry about the availability of

the material that is recycled and to promote at store recycling in an effort to increasing clean bags recycling and closing the loop.

Ms. Browne asked if communication has been established with the City of San Francisco to discuss the impacts of their recent plastic bag ban. Mr. Alva stated that San Francisco has been contacted, . however, San Francisco's motive was to switch from plastic single use bags to compostable bags which includes paper bags, where as the County is pursuing reducing and recycling plastic bags as well as paper bags, and promoting reusable bags.

V. Remaining Issues and Next Steps

Mr. Skye reiterated the importance of the Working Group members volunteering on the subcommittees in order to make this program more inclusive and successful as each issue would be addressed in more detail. Dorothea Park also encouraged stakeholders to participate in the subcommittees to ensure the Program was diversely developed.

Mr. Skye requested feedback on the deliverables in order to finalize details of the Program and commence implementation. The next Working Group meeting is scheduled for June 18, 2008. Mr. Skye noted that the location for next meeting will be announced by email. Full details will be sent to all participants prior to the meeting.