

Los Angeles County Single Use Bag Reduction And Recycling Program Working Group Subcommittees -- Meeting Notes

Public Education and Outreach Subcommittee -- 6/25/08 10:30 a.m.

Participants included Frank Kwan, Los Angeles County Office of Education, Kirk Shelton, Los Angeles County Department of Consumer Affairs, Jennifer Forkish, Ek & Ek (rep. American Chemistry Council), Diana Dixon-Davis, 31st District PTSA and her colleague, Andrea Harbin, Harbin Innovative Products, Burt Kumagawa, Los Angeles County CEO, Coby Skye, Los Angeles County Department of Public Works, Sevak Khatchadorian, Public Works, and Tobie Mitchell, Public Works.

Coby Skye went over the deliverables relating to this Subcommittee, which include the Public Education and Outreach component, the Environmental Message, the Website, and the Store Recognition and Minimum Participation Levels. Frank Kwan and Kirk Shelton joined the call and introduced themselves.

Staff has updated each deliverable to incorporate comments and suggestions. These components will be integrated into the Program Packet for distribution to effected stores with a letter promoting the program co-signed by the County of Los Angeles and the California Grocers Association.

Working Group members stressed the fact that cashiers/baggers are critical to a successful program, since oftentimes they are the only point of contact the public has with store personnel, and they are the ones who need to interact with reusable bags, either positively or negatively. The use of signs at storefronts to remind customers to bring their reusable bags in would also be of great help reshaping public behavior.

Working group members stated that branding and utilizations of effective slogans geared towards specific targets were very important. Diana Dixon Davis suggested the utilization of PTAs in an effort to publicize the program. Frank Kwan and Diana Dixon-Davis also recommended that information packets intended to be distributed to schools and teachers be streamlined for distribution to students in recognition of hardships that many schools and teachers face in today's budget crises.

Working Group members agreed timing is critical and the plastic bag informational website should be available prior to the launch of the program. With regard to comments received to date, Working Group members agreed incorporating additional citations and making other minor changes would adequately address those comments. A recommendation was for the website to incorporate a kids section, and to include in the Reusable Bags section information on where County residents can purchase reusable bags.

Working Group members stressed the need for general fact sheets addressing the negative aspects of single use grocery bags, and explaining the program and how to get more information.

Kirk Shelton inquired about involving other public agencies in promotion of the Program. He also expressed interest in utilization of the "Brag About Your Bag" logo for other County Departments. Mr. Skye noted that the Working group has and will continue to approach other agencies in the promotion of the Program. Mr. Skye also informed the Working Group that Los Angeles County departments are free to utilize the "Brag About Your Bag" artwork to promote reusable bags.

Store Operations Subcommittee -- 6/26/08, 10:30 a.m.

Participants included Kristin Power and Samantha Martinez of the California Grocers Association and Coby Skye, Sevak Khatchadorian and Virginia Jauregui, of the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works.

Coby Skye went over the store specific program options. This document will serve as a guidebook for stores to implement voluntary bag reduction programs at their stores, and is therefore the most critical element of the Program. This document will be featured in the Program Packet that will be distributed to effected stores with a letter promoting the program co-signed by the County of Los Angeles and the California Grocers Association.

Mr. Skye raised a question regarding the use of languages other than English when distributing the documents to stores in the Los Angeles County area. Kristin Power commented that because of the early stage of the process, other languages should be considered at a later day.

Regarding Item 1: *Retraining of Store Personnel*, Ms. Power suggested that the term "carryout bag" be used in order to distinguish plastic carryout bags from other types of plastic bags, e.g. produce bags. She also suggested the language concerning cashier competition be eliminated from the program options section due to possible labor union disputes. This concept would still be retained in another section.

In regard to items 2 and 3, Ms. Power discussed some of the legal challenges that may constrain certain stores

Samantha Martinez, CGA, mentioned that when the plastic bag packet is set for release, that a cover letter should be drafted to include an additional paragraph that explains the voluntary nature of the program, and as to what is included in the packet.

The Working Group discussed the merits of hosting a press conference in conjunction with the official launch of the Program, as designated by the distribution of the joint letter and package. It was suggested that, in lieu of the July Working Group meeting, participants could be invited to join the press conference. Both ideas met with approval. To maximize participation of CGA members at the press conference, Ms. Power recommended holding the event between July 16 and July 28.

Technical Advisory Subcommittee -- 6/26/08, 3:00 p.m.

Participants included Keith Christman, American Chemistry Council, Tim Shestek, American Chemistry Council, Jennifer Forkish, Ek & Ek (rep. American Chemistry Council), Susan Moulton, Waste Management Inc., Coby Skye, Los Angeles County Department of Public Works, Sevak Khatchadorian, Public Works, and Virginia Jauregui, Public Works.

Coby Skye, DPW staff, went over the deliverables relating to this Subcommittee, which include the Store Definitions, Disposal Reduction Rate Methodology, Litter Reduction Program, and Recycling and Recycled Content. Staff has updated each deliverable to incorporate comments and suggestions. These components will be integrated into the Program Packet for distribution to effected stores with a letter promoting the program co-signed by the County of Los Angeles and the California Grocers Association. Mr. Skye also informed the subcommittee that the packet would also include the American Chemistry Council's Plastic Bag Recycling Tool Kit.

Mr. Skye noted that, following discussions with a number of stakeholders, the document describing the disposal rate measurement methodology would be amended to incorporate a discussion of the various factors that may impact the rate, such as economic factors, reuse, recycled content, new stores opening, and other factors. Attempting to numerically account for these factors would significant increase the complexity, cost, and margin of error for the disposal rate. Therefore, the Working Group agreed it would be more pragmatic to include a detailed discussion and assessment of these factors when reporting back to the Board of Supervisors and in developing the recommendation to the Board in assessing the success of the program and meeting the 30 and 65% disposal reduction goals in 2010 and 2013, respectively.

Keith Christman stated that although they would like to see tangible numerical values in regards to reuse of plastic bags incorporated into the methodology, they understand that mitigating circumstances would make it hard to do so. He also mentioned their intent to study reuse rates and requested the County participation in that effort. Mr. Skye confirmed the County's interest in working with ACC on this issue.

The Subcommittee discussed the next steps that will be taken to incorporate Category 2 stores on a voluntary basis into the program. Since the stores are not subject to AB 2449 compliance, which includes reporting requirements, these stores would not alter the recycling rate data. The intent is to reach out to these stores by July 1, 2009 and provide incentives for these stores to voluntarily participate in the program.

Working group members stressed the importance of involving environmental groups and the public for the Program's process. Susan Moulton from Waste Management volunteered to contact Keep California Beautiful to coordinate with this organization, especially regarding the County Program's public education and litter prevention components. The American Chemistry Council is also a member of KCB and offered to contact the organization as well.