

COVID-19 Impacts on Recycling and Waste Services

The current Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has caused many disruptions in recycling markets and waste management operations. On March 19, 2020, the Board of Supervisors announced the “Safer at Home” Order (Order) to help slow the spread of the virus by requiring the closure of non-essential businesses and directing residents to stay at home.

Many of the materials recovery facilities within the County have halted processing of recyclables and green waste due to health and safety concerns and a lack of storage space, and instead are sending these materials straight to landfill. However, some facilities have reported that the amount of overall waste discarded has decreased, with the County Sanitation Districts indicating that they are experiencing a 40 percent decrease in commercial incoming municipal solid waste (MSW) and a 22 percent increase in residential incoming MSW at their facilities. Calabasas Landfill reports that the facility is experiencing a 55 percent decrease in incoming commercial MSW and 15 percent decrease in incoming residential MSW.

Many recycling centers have reduced hours or temporarily closed operations. In addition, the waste hauling company 365 Disposal & Recycling Inc., located in Sun Valley has reported a 20 to 30 percent decrease in incoming waste since the end of March, which led to a reduction in tipping fee revenues. Recycling commodity values have also decreased causing an additional loss in revenue to recycling centers.

As reported in an article released by [Forbes](#) on April 25, 2020, there has been an increased surge of single-use plastic products being discarded due to the need for personal protective equipment such as gloves and face masks, in addition to continuous need and use of disposable items such as water bottles, hand sanitizer, plastic bags and cleaning wipes as reported by [Waste 360](#) on March 26, 2020. Some businesses throughout the Country such as coffee shops and grocery stores have temporarily disallowed the use of reusable items such as cups and bags in an attempt to stop the spread of the virus.

CalRecycle released a statement on April 21, 2020, to assure jurisdictions that the impacts of COVID-19 and their good faith efforts will be considered when evaluating compliance with waste diversion and recycling regulations. The statement provided additional guidelines for facility operators to file emergency waivers in addition to providing best management practices for storage of recyclable materials and mitigation of fire hazards while ensuring the health and safety of their employees.

For more information, please visit _____