

The Wizard of Waste

Mr. Michael Mohajer (Mike), known to us as the wizard of waste stepped down from the Los Angeles County Solid Waste Management Committee/Integrated Waste Management Task Force (Task Force) in January 2025 after serving over 20 years as a Public Representative.

Mike has been involved with environmental issues and specifically solid waste and hazardous waste management for over 44 years. He began his career with Los Angeles County and then worked briefly for the private industry, returning to the County in 1979. In 2000, Mike became the Assistant Deputy Director for Los Angeles County Public Works managing its Environmental Programs Division and had extensive involvement in the implementation of Assembly Bill 939 (1998), California Integrated Waste Management Act, which mandated a reduction of waste being diverted to landfills. Mike worked diligently to assist with the County's compliance. He retired in March 2003.

On May 13, 2003, Mike was appointed by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors (Board) to serve on the Task Force as an alternate member representing the public interest and on April 13, 2005, he was appointed by the Board to serve as a regular member representing public interest. In the interim, Mike also served as the Chair of the Los Angeles County Solid Waste Facilities Hearing Board as an appointee of the Board ensuring solid waste facilities operators' compliance with AB 939's requirements.

The Task Force has had the responsibility of guiding the 88 cities in Los Angeles County and the County unincorporated communities in their development of their planning documents related to solid waste. They also undertook the issues related to Senate Bill 1383 (2016) that requires California to reduce the amount of organic waste sent to landfills by 75% and to recover at least 20% of edible food for consumption by 2025. Mike was always up for challenges, especially those involved in legislation. He was also the Task Force's Legislative Liaison and in 2008 was recognized by the American Society of Civil Engineers as the "Outstanding Engineer in Legislative Activities in the State of California."

In addition to serving on the Task Force, he also served on its three Subcommittees:

- Alternative Technology Advisory
- Facility and Plan Review Subcommittee
- Public Education and Information Subcommittee

Mike is widely regarded as a leader and to many, a pioneer in the solid waste management field with his wealth of knowledge. To add to his accolade, he served on numerous environmental committees and associations. For example, he was appointed by the Speaker of the Assembly to the California Integrated Waste Management Board's Local Government Technical Advisory Committee in 2002 and was the Chair of the Solid Waste Association of North America, California's Legislative Task Force in 2004-2005.

With Mike's nearly half a century of expertise and wizardry in all facets of solid waste, and serving over 20 years on the Task Force, we will surely miss his notable contributions. Thank you, Mike, for sharing your wisdom regarding waste management and for your many years of service. You are definitely the wizard of waste!

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