



Los Angeles County Civil Grand Jury Report

A Diet For Landfills: Cutting Down
On Food Waste

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PUBLIC WORKS



Los Angeles County Civil Grand Jury

- Examines County government, municipalities, and special districts
- Ensures that the County is being governed honestly and efficiently and that County monies are being handled appropriately
- Divided into committees to concentrate on certain areas under investigation
- In 2019-2020, one investigative committee focused on food waste

Purpose & Methodology

- Investigate how the County will:
 - Reduce waste sent to landfills by 80% by the year 2025
 - Reduce organic waste sent to landfills by 75% by the year 2025
- Motivated to choose topic due to:
 - China National Sword Policy
 - State Organic Waste Laws: AB 1826, AB 1594, SB 1383





Report Summary: Infrastructure

- Needed to divert food waste from landfills, where it decomposes and creates methane emissions
- Shortfall in food waste recycling infrastructure
- Only 4% of the County's organic waste recycling infrastructure can accept food waste

Report Summary: Current Food Waste Programs



County's Pilot Commercial Food Waste Diversion Program



Scrape Your Plate Food Waste Recycling Program at Public Works
Headquarters



Food waste recycling programs in other jurisdictions: City of Los Angeles,
City of Manhattan Beach, Culver City, City of Claremont, and City of
Redondo Beach



Report Summary: School Districts

- Every school in the 80 school districts has excess edible food and food scraps going to landfills
- Only 3% of schools reported composting food scraps onsite or offsite
- LAUSD throws away 600 tons of food waste each week, at a cost of at least \$100,000
- School gardens teach students about food waste and composting

Report Summary: Obstacles

- Cost to train staff and employees on proper separation
- Cost of collection and processing food waste
- Government facilities may be under the jurisdiction of the State
- No cost savings for residents who generate less waste





Report Summary: Food Waste Drop-Offs



- LA Compost
 - Nonprofit organization that has drop-off booths at several weekly farmer's markets
 - Operates several hubs throughout the City of Los Angeles and other Cities where residents can drop off their food waste
- In January 2020, only 8 of the 32 hubs were still accepting additional food waste from new residents

Report Recommendations



Weekly food waste drop-off



On-site food waste processing at offices and schools



Incentives to separate food waste



Develop college and workforce training programs



Garden/compost program at detention centers facilities



Train food donation and recycling ambassadors

Additional Report Recommendations



Create a food waste education component for all outdoor public events



Implement food waste recycling at County facilities, especially at large venues



Work with neighborhood councils to increase public education around food waste



Create gardening and composting programs in every school



Implement food waste collection and build facilities to recycle food waste

Timeline to Respond

A response to the recommendations is due from selected respondents no later than Friday, October 30, 2020

Respondents must indicate whether they agree with the finding and whether the recommendation has been implemented or will be implemented in the future

Public Works is currently preparing a response and will coordinate with other County Departments and Cities.

Questions ?
