

Los Angeles County Solid Waste Management Committee/  
Integrated Waste Management Task Force

**Minutes of May 15, 2014**

County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works  
900 South Fremont Avenue  
Alhambra, California

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Betsey Landis, Environmental Organization Representative  
Margaret Clark, California League of Cities-Los Angeles Division  
Mike Mohajer, General Public Representative  
Ron Saldana, Los Angeles County Disposal Association

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS REPRESENTED BY OTHERS:**

Gail Farber, rep by Carlos Ruiz, County of Los Angeles Dept. of Public Works  
Dr. Jonathan Fielding, rep by Gerry Villalobos, County of Los Angeles Department of  
Public Health  
Enrique Zaldivar, rep by Reina Pereira, City of Los Angeles Bureau of Sanitation

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS NOT PRESENT:**

Carl Clark, Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries, Inc.  
David Kim, City of Los Angeles  
Grace Chan, County Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County  
Gerry Miller, City of Los Angeles  
Dr. Barry Wallerstein, South Coast Air Quality Management District  
Mary Ann Lutz, California League of Cities-Los Angeles Division  
Michael Conway, City of Long Beach Public Works Department  
Mitchell Englander, City of Los Angeles  
Sam Perdomo, Business/Commerce Representative

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Jennifer Wallin, CalRecycle  
Curtis Williams, City of Santa Clarita  
David Coscia, County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works  
Chris Sheppard, County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works  
Coby Skye, County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works  
Tobie Mitchell, County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works  
Wayde Hunter, NVC/GHNNC  
Kevin Best, Real Energy

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Meeting called to order at 1:08 p.m.

**II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR APRIL 17, 2014**

Due to the lack of a quorum, no actions were taken. Minutes from this meeting are not official.

**III. REPORT FROM THE PUBLIC EDUCATION AND INFORMATION SUBCOMMITTEE**

Mr. Mike Mohajer reported that the Public Education and Information Subcommittee members met at 9:00 a.m., but Mr. Mohajer was disappointed with the turnout of the meeting. The Agenda was not posted on time and not consistent with the Brown Act; therefore, the committee was unable to take any formal action. Articles were not submitted to the committee for review and staff was late to the meeting. The Committee discussed writing a letter to the Director of Public Works to have management commitment. Mr. Mohajer has discussed his concern with Mr. Carlos Ruiz to have a verbal follow-up discussion first with management instead of the written letter.

**IV. REPORT FROM THE ALTERNATIVE TECHNOLOGY ADVISORY SUBCOMMITTEE**

Ms. Tobie Mitchell reported that the Alternative Technology Advisory Subcommittee had an informal meeting because there was no quorum. The County partnered with the California State Association of Counties and the Sanitation Districts to host a one-day tour for Senator Ricardo Lara and his staff. The tour included a visit to the Puente Hills MRF and two pilot scale conversion technology projects located at the Carson Waste Water Treatment Plant; one project for co-digesting food waste and another for thermally processing biosolids to create diesel fuel.

In June, there will be an Air and Waste Management Association conference in Long Beach. Mr. Coby Skye will be moderating a thermal conversion technology panel; while Mark McDannel from the County Sanitation Districts will moderate a panel regarding anaerobic digestion.

Ms. Mitchell reported that the contract with Alternative Resources Inc. expired on May 13, 2014. The Subcommittee is very satisfied with the work they provided during the life of the contract. Staff has prepared a new Request For Proposals, and additional information will be provided at the next ATAS meeting. Conversion technology facility tours will be included as part of the new technical contract.

Mr. Carlos Ruiz announced that this was going to be the last day for Ms. Mitchell. Mr. Mohajer thanked Ms. Mitchell for the years of service she provided to Public Works, ATAS, and the Task Force.

#### **V. REPORT FROM THE FACILITY PLAN & REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE (FPRS)**

Ms. Betsey Landis reported the subcommittee received an update on Sunshine Canyon Landfill, and the odor complaints have gone down from 164 complaints in March of 2014, to 122 complaints in April 2014. There were five Notices of Violations issued by Air Quality Management District in April. Compared to last year, the number of odor complaints increased from 112 in March 2013 to 122 in March 2014.

The subcommittee will be reviewing the Initial Study for the Countywide Siting Element in June. Ms. Landis showed a chart that depicts the 2008 composition of California's waste stream versus a 2013 disposal waste stream at landfills in LA County.

The subcommittee also discussed the Finding of Conformance Reports submitted by various landfills. There were also questions regarding the re-vegetation meeting with the Sunshine Canyon City/County Landfill

Staff sent two letters commenting on the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the proposed expansion of the Scholl Canyon Landfill, and proposed Irwindale Materials Recovery Facility and Transfer Station. Ms. Landis commended staff for an excellent job on the letters.

Mr. Mohajer commented on the chart showing the 2008 Statewide Waste Characterization Study by CalRecycle and 2013 landfill waste characterization data for Los Angeles County. Staff used the 2013 report for the landfills within Los Angeles County and compared it against the 2008 State study, and the results were comparable.

#### **VI. CALRECYCLE UPDATE**

Mr. Howard Levenson, Deputy Director of CalRecycle, introduced members of the new CalRecycle staff in Long Beach. Mr. Levenson discussed several topics.

- AB341 – The bill sets a statewide goal of 75% of source reduction, composting, and recycling by 2020. Jurisdictions still operate under the old AB939 goal of 50% per capita disposal target. CalRecycle is obligated to provide a report to the Legislature by January 1; this report is now being reviewed by CalEPA. A glimpse of the report's content was included in the 2013 October interim report. The focus of the current draft report is

pretty much the same, identifying six key areas where CalRecycle thinks more action is needed:

1. Moving organics out of landfills
  2. Reforming of the Beverage Container Program
  3. Expanding recycling and composting infrastructure within the State
  4. Recognition of the need for new models for funding, for both State and local programs
  5. Promoting extended producer responsibility
  6. Increasing State procurement of recycled content materials
- Organic Waste Management – The Air Resources Board has adopted a 2014 update to the Scoping Plan to move the state towards reduction of greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels. CalRecycle has worked closely with the Air Resources Board for the last 3-4 years and there is a large component of the Scoping Plan focused on the Waste Management sector. The Scoping Plan lays out key activities, and clearly states that if we don't see enough organics coming out of the landfills in the next few years as a result of either mandatory commercial recycling, which is already in place, or as a result of AB1826, which is in the legislature now, which mandates organic commercial organics, the Air Resources Board is committed to take its own regulatory actions to stop the disposal of organics in landfills.
  - AB1826 – Requires businesses to “recycle” organic materials. There are still a lot of ongoing discussions about the bill and its contents, including the definitions. The provisions of the bill are similar to AB 341, which required mandatory commercial recycling. This would be an add-on to existing programs and not the creation of new programs.
  - SB1594 – This bill would phase out the “diversion credit” given to green waste used as alternative daily cover at landfills by 2020. CalRecycle has some concerns regarding the overuse of alternative daily cover at landfills and the abuse of daily limits, and is currently investigating the issue at several landfills in the State.
  - Composting Regulation – There are a number of key issues that stakeholders are having:
    1. How to regulate anaerobic digestion
    2. Definition of food material
    3. What level of physical contaminants can be allowed in a finished compost product

- Bottle Bill Grants – As a result of the structural deficit, CalRecycle has put forth a major reform proposal to address the structural deficit. Unfortunately one of the items on the list to be eliminated is the City/County payment program. The Governor's budget zeroes out payments for the fiscal year 2014/2015. Some of the money will be going to a new grant based Beverage Container Enforcement Program similar to the Tire Enforcement Program. In addition, the Governor's budget has proposed shifting the funding to local Conservation Corps.
- Cap and Trade – The Cap and Trade Program is run by the Air Resource Board, and has generated millions of dollars in its first two auctions. The Governor's budget has allocated to CalRecycle 30 million dollars from the Cap and Trade proceeds to administer grant programs that are oriented towards recycling, composting, and manufacturing facilities in the state. CalRecycle just released a notice of funding availability ten days ago for the organics grants due July 31. A second notice will be sent out on plastic, fiber, and glass grants in 2-3 weeks.
- 2013 Electronic Annual Report – To be released mid-June and will be due August 1.
- Mattress Stewardship Program – CalRecycle will have the proposed regulation on the May 20th public meeting agenda to approve the language in the Regulation.

Ms. Cara Morgan, Branch Chief of CalRecycle, discussed some reporting issues regarding the Mandatory Commercial Recycling law. Ms. Morgan felt everything has been going well. The jurisdictions have met the expectations and are doing a great job in respect to the education and outreach. A few jurisdictions have had challenges with the monitoring aspects. Across the board, we are seeing many more businesses and multifamily complexes recycling.

Mr. Ron Saldana asked a question about organics: How will it be processed and handled, being that it's a huge expense? Where is the money going to come from? Mr. Levenson answered, it's not going to be easy, but explained that it will be a (small) first step and will keep trying.

Mr. Carlos Ruiz noted it would take at least ten years and perhaps as long as 20 years for LA County to put in place an infrastructure and legal authority to do what needs to be done to meet proposed organics "recycling" mandates based on the proposals that we have seen from Legislature. These include ordinances, reviewing/renegotiating contracts, etc. Mr. Ruiz, explained, L.A. County is responsible for managing 21 residential franchises, 7 garbage disposal districts, and 46 commercial franchises, a huge task. Is it realistic to think that in five

years we can do all that? Has it been considered as an option for the legislature to extend the deadline? Mr. Levenson explained that no jurisdiction is mandated to reach 75 percent; the goal is 75 percent by 2020. Mr. Levenson stated this is something that might be revisited many times; and agreed it will be incredibly difficult, but it's our job to make it as feasible as possible and see how far we get and report back to the Legislature.

Ms. Betsey Landis had a question regarding anaerobic digestion and the permitting process. "Aren't there levels (of contamination) established by County Health Departments and County Agricultural Commissions to protect people from eating certain crops grown on contaminated compost? At Lancaster Landfill, when the compost is unacceptable, they put it back in the landfill. If the compost produced by anaerobic digestion at CalRecycle's proposed facilities is unacceptable due to levels of pathogens, broken glass or other dangerous materials, won't this result in many small unregulated landfills scattered all over the State? Adding unregulated landfills to the State will not help decrease greenhouse gas emissions." Mr. Levenson agreed it's a good point by Ms. Landis, and it's something CalRecycle will have to carefully look at because certain health and safety standards need to be met. If it doesn't meet the standards and it's improperly land applied, then there are concerns expressed by the Regional Water Board, AQMD, etc. There have to be some levels where it does not exceed those pathogens and if it does not meet that, then it is going to end up being landfilled, which we don't want, but it's better than having it land applied. Ms. Landis is concerned about the emphasis by CalRecycle on anaerobic digestion as the sole composting process and asked Mr. Levenson if they have considered other possible methods?

Mr. Ron Saldana asked what's done with the material once it's processed where it is taken? Is there something CalRecycle can do to expand the market for the composting material? Mr. Levenson answered that throughout the years CalRecycle have done a lot. It's hard to get compost that is priced right and consistent to every kind of agriculture situation. CalRecycle is currently working at the State level to be able to get some influence.

Ms. Margaret Clark asked Mr. Levenson, when the Legislature is thinking on proposed legislation, do they come to you (CalRecycle) as experts for input or is it someone else's idea. Mr. Levenson noted that CalRecycle has input on many of bills, sometimes they have official positions from the Governor, in which case it's a public position. Sometimes it is at the request of the Author's office and CalRecycle provides them with technical comments; those are usually not public. For the most part, CalRecycle doesn't have a lot of say in the bills.

Mr. Mike Mohajer stated he supports the mechanism that is currently utilized to implement mandatory commercial recycling. Mr. Mohajer is also in support of the organic waste if the same process is used. Unfortunately, the process is not the

same, it's significantly different. Mr. Mohajer read a portion from AB1826, pointing out the meaning of "reasonable vicinity." He continued and read another portion, "the capacity available of material to be accepted." Mr. Mohajer mentioned various parts of the bill that he would like CalRecycle to consider deleting from AB1826. Another point Mr. Mohajer made was that, "if I do everything you want me to do, implement an organic program, and at the end there is no market for it, I don't want to get penalized because there is no market."

**VII. AB 1826 – MANDATORY COMMERCIAL ORGANIC WASTE RECYCLING**

Ms. Margaret Clark asked for a letter to be sent out to the cities on AB 1826 based on the Task Force's previous position on the bill.

**VIII. LEGISLATIVE UPDATE**

Ms. Clark asked that, due to a lack of quorum, letters on new or amended bills where the Task Force has already sent a letter or there is otherwise clear direction from the Task Force on the issue can be processed.

**IX. AB 1126 CALRECYCLE IMPLEMENTING REGULATIONS**

No discussion on this item.

**X. PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comments.

**XI. NEXT MEETING DATE**

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 19, 2014, in the Alhambra Conference Room.

The meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

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