



## Commercial Recycling – 17 Leadership Stories

These stories were compiled between May 2009 and May 2011 in partnership with the California Integrated Waste Management Board (now known as CalRecycle). Additional climate change information is available at [www.ca-ilg.org/climatechange](http://www.ca-ilg.org/climatechange).

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## **Stories about Local Commercial Recycling Programs**



## 1) City and County of Sacramento - Commercial Recycling Program to Address Climate Change

**Community: City of Sacramento and County of Sacramento**  
**Population: 1.4 million**

### Summary

The Sacramento Regional Solid Waste Authority, under a joint powers agreement between the City of Sacramento and Sacramento County, has a business recycling ordinance that requires non-exclusive franchised haulers to provide – and businesses to subscribe to – recycling services.

### Program Highlights

- Haulers must provide recycling services to all commercial customers subscribing to four-cubic yards or more of waste collection services per week.
- Businesses required to subscribe to recycling services and to establish onsite recycling procedures and signage for employees.
- Haulers must report quarterly on recycling tonnages and ultimate disposition of collected recyclables.
- The regional authority undertakes heavy education and monitoring of businesses to ensure their compliance.

### Lessons Learned

- Work closely with businesses to help them understand the importance of recycling and to help them establish onsite recycling at their place of business.
- When undertaking a recycling program geared toward a large number of businesses, start educating the largest businesses first to capture the maximum amount of recyclables earlier in the program.

### Climate Action Connection

Sixty percent of landfill waste is generated by businesses. Promoting commercial recycling helps keep recyclable materials out of landfills. This conserves resources, extends the life of the landfill, saves businesses money and reduces the potential generation of methane, a greenhouse gas that is released from improperly managed landfills.

Programs that require all businesses to establish onsite recycling greatly enhances the amount of recyclables kept out of landfills, thus reducing the potential for greenhouse gases emitted from landfills.

### Resources to Learn More

- [Sacramento Regional Solid Waste Authority Commercial Recycling](#)

- [Sacramento Regional Solid Waste Authority Commercial Recycling Ordinance](#)

## **The Rest of the Story...**

The Sacramento Regional Solid Waste Authority (SWA) regulates commercial waste collection services through a joint powers agreement between the City of Sacramento and Sacramento County for businesses within these two jurisdictions. In May of 2007, the SWA adopted a commercial recycling ordinance to greatly expand the amount of recyclables collected from area businesses. The neighboring cities of Rancho Cordova and Citrus Heights have adopted similar ordinances to contribute to a region-wide effort to divert waste from landfills.

## **Recycling Service Requirements**

Haulers must be franchised to operate within the SWA and must provide recycling services to any business that subscribes to four cubic yards or greater of waste collection service per week. In turn, businesses are required to contract for recycling services. Any business, including stand-alone stores, restaurants, manufacturers, building owners or office building tenants must separate recyclables in the workplace or be subject to enforcement action by the SWA.

## **Enforcement and Compliance**

To improve compliance, the SWA's ordinance requires that businesses establish onsite recycling procedures that include education and signage for employees and tenants. Haulers are not held liable for lack of compliance by businesses, but businesses and haulers both are subject to a stiff \$1,000 per day fine for failure to comply with their respective responsibilities under the ordinance.

Haulers are required to provide automatic lift containers, bins and roll off bins with locks for recyclables to guard against scavenging. On a quarterly basis, haulers must report their number of commercial customers, tonnage of recyclables collected and the location of the recycling facility where delivered for recycling.

## **Education Is Key**

The SWA recognized the importance of educating businesses on how to establish workplace separation of recyclables for collection by the hauler or independent recycler. To this end, it has prepared extensive educational materials for businesses to educate owners and their employees. These materials include a handbook on recycling for businesses, sample signage for use in the workplace and on recycling containers, tips on how to avoid excess waste, and information on how to communicate workplace recycling requirements to employees.



## 2) County of San Diego - Commercial Recycling Program to Address Climate Change

**Community: County of San Diego**

**Population: 3.1 million**

### Summary

Unincorporated San Diego County's mandatory recycling ordinance states "Mandatory recycling shall be in effect for all waste generated in unincorporated San Diego County." It requires designated recyclables to be stored separately from refuse, requires the non-exclusive franchised waste haulers operating in the county to provide recycling services to businesses, and prohibits haulers from delivering for disposal any recyclable materials mixed with non-recyclable trash.

The ordinance includes special provisions for office buildings over 20,000 square feet and the hospitality industry. County staff work with multi-family and hospitality businesses to assist them establish on-site recycling systems which increases ability of the hauler to collect more recyclables.

### Program Highlights

- Recycling is mandatory in the unincorporated area of San Diego County, with special provisions for commercial buildings over 20,000 square feet and the hospitality industry (i.e., hotels and restaurants).
- County staff assist multi-family complexes and hospitality businesses to improve on-site recycling systems.
- Non-exclusive franchise hauler agreements with the county require haulers to comply with the county's mandatory recycling ordinance.
- Twenty-nine franchised haulers establish their own rates and level of service; businesses may obtain waste and recycling services from hauler of their choice.

#### Climate Action Connection

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Providing waste audits and technical assistance to businesses, including apartments and hotels/restaurants, can enhance compliance with mandatory recycling programs.

## Lessons Learned

- Unless recycling is mandatory, businesses are unlikely to recycle in large quantities.
- Actively promoting recycling directly to tenants and businesses increases the likelihood of recycling.

## Resources to Learn More

- [San Diego County Commercial Recycling Website](#)
- [San Diego County Commercial Recycling Ordinance](#)

## The Rest of the Story...

In 1996, San Diego County adopted a mandatory recycling ordinance that applies to all waste generated in the county, regardless of whether the generator is a residential or business entity. It includes special provisions that require businesses over 20,000 square feet in size to recycle white paper and corrugated cardboard and provisions that require restaurants and taverns and hotels/motels with eating/drinking establishments to recycle glass jars and bottles, white goods, tin and bi-metal cans, plastic beverage bottles, aluminum and corrugated cardboard. In fall 2009, the county will begin reviewing and updating the existing ordinance.

## Education the Key to Recycling in Multi-Family Complexes and Hospitality Industry

Over 50,000 people live in the over 35,000 separate apartments in over 700 multi-family complexes (apartment buildings and condominium complexes) in San Diego County.

Beginning in 2001, the county began educating property owners and tenants of multi-family residential complexes to assist them in establishing on-site recycling systems to make it easier for haulers to collect recyclable materials. In coordination with local haulers, the county established block captains at the complexes, offered free recycling bins for indoor and outdoor locations, and heavily promoted recycling to tenants with seminars and door-to-door literature. The efforts paid off with a significant increase in recycling at multi-family complexes, many of which reached a 50 percent recycling rate.

The county also offers waste audits and assistance to the hospitality industry. The audits also cover safety of recycling facilities, cleanliness of trucks and bins, and overall availability of recycling service. Businesses that achieve a high level of recycling receive an award.

**Graduated Enforcement Promotes Compliance**

San Diego County uses a graduated approach to enforcement to encourage compliance by businesses. For example, if a business is not complying with the recycling requirement, county officials visit the business and provide assistance to improve the recycling rate. However, if the business is unresponsive, the county sends a warning letter, followed by a fine that can increase over time. Because of its strong emphasis on proactive education and assistance, the county has rarely imposed fines.



### 3) City of Arcadia - Commercial Recycling Program to Address Climate Change

**Community: City of Arcadia (Los Angeles County)**  
**Population: 56,500**

#### Summary

Arcadia requires its four franchised haulers to ensure that both business and residential customers recycle 50 percent of solid waste generated.

#### Program Highlights

- Haulers must provide recycling bins and services to both residential and commercial customers.
- Haulers must report monthly tonnages, receivables and diversion rate.
- Haulers are responsible for educating businesses about recycling.

#### Lessons Learned

- Understanding how to best work with ethnic business owners to promote recycling is an important key to success.

#### Resources to Learn More

- [Arcadia Ordinances Related to Commercial Waste Hauling](#)

#### The Rest of the Story...

Arcadia has a long standing ordinance requiring the city's four permitted solid waste haulers to provide recycling bins and services to both residential and commercial customers. The haulers are required to have a business license in Arcadia. Within 90 days of receiving the business license, the haulers must submit to the city a strategy plan for meeting and exceeding the city's 50 percent diversion goal. Arcadia's ordinance limits the number of haulers that may operate in the city.

#### Climate Action Connection

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While the city's residential sector has achieved a 70 percent diversion rate, the diversion rate for the city's 4,132 businesses has been just above 50 percent, but still within the target set for haulers by the city's ordinance.

### **Compliance**

Once haulers are authorized to collect waste from commercial generators, they must submit monthly reports detailing the total tonnage of solid waste disposed, the total number of accounts served, and the total gross receipts for the month. In addition, each hauler must calculate its annual diversion rate. City staff monitors the monthly reports and diversion rates to ensure compliance by the haulers.

The city's ordinance requires the haulers to provide recycling services, furnish recycling bins and work with businesses to ensure the business recycles. The rates charged for collection services are determined by the haulers. Businesses select which hauler to use, thereby creating competition between haulers for business accounts.

Business are typically provide two three-yard bins, one for general waste and one for recyclables, which are taken to a Material Recovery Facility. The program does not include food or green waste.



## 4) City of Chula Vista - Commercial Recycling Program to Address Climate Change

**Community: City of Chula Vista (San Diego County)**

**Population: 230,000**

### Summary

Since 1990, Chula Vista has required that all waste generators recycle, including all commercial and industrial businesses. A tiered rate structure provides a financial incentive to businesses to recycle and the city emphasizes education and assistance to encourage compliance.

### Program Highlights

- All businesses, regardless of size, must recycle.
- Tiered rate structure encourages compliance.
- City emphasizes education and technical assistance to encourage businesses to recycle.
- City's exclusive franchise hauler assists with education and compliance as part of its franchise agreement with the city.

### Lessons Learned

- Merely having an ordinance mandating commercial recycling will not be effective unless it is complemented by a robust education and technical assistance program for businesses.
- Offer businesses a clear path to compliance, with achievable targets, face to face support, and you will see behavior change.
- Include working with generators to encourage recycling part of the franchise agreement or permit condition for waste and recycling service providers.

### Climate Action Connection

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Chula Vista's active education and technical assistance program to promote business compliance complements the city's mandatory recycling ordinance, thus making it easier for businesses to comply.

### Resources to Learn More

- [City of Chula Vista Clean Business Program](#)

- [City of Chula Vista Environmental Services \(including recycling\) Information](#)
- [Chula Vista recycling ordinance – Municipal Code, Title 8, Chapter 8.25](#)

## The Rest of the Story ...

### Landfill fees stimulates mandatory recycling requirement

Chula Vista adopted mandatory recycling by all residents in 1990 as a way of saving ratepayers money. The county, which owned the landfill at the time, adopted a tipping fee structure that charged higher disposal fees to waste from jurisdictions that did not adopt mandatory recycling. The mandatory recycling requirement applies to everyone in Chula Vista, with no exemptions. The city also recognized that mandatory recycling would assist it in meeting the AB 939 goals, just recently adopted by the State. In 1997, when the county sold the landfill to a private company, Chula Vista retained the mandatory recycling requirement.

### Education is the key to enforcement and compliance

The city places heavy emphasis and staff resources on educating businesses and providing technical assistance, including audits, to promote compliance. While notices of violation may be issued, the city relies on education and personal assistance, and not penalties for businesses needing prompting to comply. City staff consider themselves advocates for businesses by assisting them and explaining how they will save money by recycling more and disposing less.

The city's exclusive franchise hauler also assists in promoting compliance by working with new businesses to explain the recycling requirements, options for compliance, and the financial benefits of recycling (i.e., lower rates compared to trash disposal). The hauler's staff also may alert city staff to businesses that refuse to recycle and could benefit from education or assistance.

Although virtually all commercial and industrial accounts in Chula Vista have recycling bins or carts, achieving a 100 percent compliance rate is difficult.

### Reporting

Chula Vista's exclusive franchised hauler must provide monthly reports on waste and recyclable tonnages collected. Businesses that utilize a third party recycler to whom they give or sell recyclables must provide annual reports to the city.

Read the Chula Vista story at [Land Use & Community Design](#).



## 5) City of Fresno - Commercial Recycling Program to Address Climate Change

**Community: City of Fresno (Fresno County)**

**Population: 490,000**

### Summary

Fresno's mandatory commercial recycling ordinance requires all retail, office and multi-family businesses to utilize the city's recycling services.

### Program Highlights

- All businesses are required to use the solid waste and recycling services provided directly by the city.
- Tiered pricing, which makes recycling less expensive, is an incentive for businesses to recycle.
- City actively educates businesses about recycling service and importance.

### Lessons Learned

- Businesses recycle more if the program is mandatory, as opposed to voluntary.
- A tiered rate structure with lower costs for recycling services significantly increases recycling by businesses.

### Climate Action Connection

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Mandatory recycling, combined with tiered rate structure, results in increased recycling by the commercial sector, thus reducing potential greenhouse gas emissions from landfills.

### Resources to Learn More

- [Fresno Mandatory Recycling Ordinance](#)
- [Zero Waste Action Plan](#)

## **The Rest of the Story...**

Although Fresno offered voluntary recycling services to commercial customers in 2000, most were not taking advantage of the opportunity to recycle. Thus, the city re-evaluated its commercial recycling program.

### **Mandatory Program Increased Recycling**

The goal of Fresno's new commercial recycling ordinance adopted in 2005 was to increase the city's overall diversion rate by increasing the amount of recycling by the 6,000 businesses (including multi-family complexes) in the city. When commercial recycling became mandatory, the citywide recycling rate increased dramatically.

Prior to enacting the mandatory commercial ordinance, Fresno's citywide diversion rate for residential and commercial users was 32 percent; after the mandatory commercial recycling ordinance was adopted, the diversion rate climbed to 62 percent. City officials attribute the increase in the diversion rate largely to the increase in recycling in the commercial sector, which includes retail, office, and multi-family generators.

### **City's Tiered Commercial Rate Structure**

Fresno provides trash, green waste and recycling services itself and actively educates businesses about recycling opportunities and potential cost savings. Different container sizes are available for commercial recycling, and business may have daily pickup if desired. The city has a two-tiered rate for disposal and recyclable pickup. As of July 2008, the cost of a 4-cubic yard container for weekly solid waste pick up is \$1,258, while the cost of the equivalent size container and service for recycling is \$344 per week. The price differential is considered the biggest incentive for businesses to recycle.



## 6) City of Huntington Beach - Commercial Recycling Program to Address Climate Change

**Community: City of Huntington Beach (Orange County)**  
**Population: 202,000**

### Summary

Huntington Beach promotes commercial recycling through a material recovery facility (MRF) operated by its exclusive solid waste hauler. The hauler also provides city businesses free recycling bins for cardboard and paper, thus increasing recycling and reducing waste collection costs for generators.

### Program Highlights

- Businesses put all waste in single bin for collection and delivery to a MRF, where recyclables are sorted from waste.
- Businesses can reduce monthly waste collection charges by source separating cardboard and paper, using the free bins provided by hauler.

### Lessons Learned

- Providing free bins to encourage source separation of cardboard and paper can increase recycling rates at MRF and reduce costs to generators.

### Resources to Learn More

- [Huntington Beach Recycling](#)
- [Huntington Beach Solid Waste Ordinance](#)

### Climate Action Connection

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Solid waste and recycling infrastructure that incorporates material recovery facilities and source separation promote recycling and reduce solid waste in landfills, thus reducing potential greenhouse gas emissions.

### The Rest of the Story...

Huntington Beach has worked with the same exclusive franchisee for over 50 years. The company provides both residential and commercial services and collects recyclables from both residences and businesses. Starting in 2007, residential customers received three bins for separation of green waste and recyclables, as well as trash, and the materials are brought to a material recovery facility.

The city and hauler determined that a three-bin system would not be effective for the large commercial and multi-family sector. Instead, a different MRF handles the single stream of waste and recyclables generated by businesses and the multi-family sector.

### **Free Bins for Paper and Cardboard for Commercial Customers**

The hauler has recently introduced free bins for businesses to separate paper and cardboard. By taking advantage of these bins, businesses can reduce their weekly or volume rate of service and thus their costs. The amount of recycling at the MRF also increases.



## 7) City of Irvine - Commercial Recycling Program to Address Climate Change

**Community: City of Irvine (Orange County)**

**Population: 209,000**

### Summary

Irvine encourages commercial recycling by charging haulers a reduced franchise fee for recyclable materials collected from businesses, compared to the franchise fee charged for solid waste collected.

### Program Highlights

- Twenty-three haulers with non-exclusive franchises cover two of Irvine's largest commercial centers.
- Tiered franchise fee system encourages haulers to promote recycling by business customers.
- City conducts onsite waste audits of largest waste generators.

### Lessons Learned

- Be sure businesses are aware that recycling services are available from haulers.
- Commercial recycling can be increased by actively educating businesses about the availability of recycling services.

### Resources to Learn More

- [Irvine Recycling](#)
- [Irvine Public Works Department](#)

### The Rest of the Story...

Irvine has promoted commercial recycling through an incentive fee structure in its hauler agreements since 1999. The city has non-exclusive franchise agreements with 23 haulers

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A tiered franchise fee structure encourages haulers to actively promote commercial recycling, thus increasing recycling and reducing waste going to landfill.



for solid waste collection in its two largest commercial centers, where the majority of the city's commercial waste generators are located.

### **Tiered Franchise Fees Encourage More Recycling**

In 2007, the city amended the hauler franchise agreements to increase recycling. Haulers must offer recycling services to both new and old businesses regardless of business size and type.

The new franchise agreements with haulers encourage recycling by charging:

- a 10 percent fee on gross receipts from collection of waste sent to landfills,
- a four percent fee for materials delivered to material recovery facility, and
- no fee for materials sent directly to end-use recyclers, such as metal recyclers, paper processors, and composting facilities.

Rates charged to customers for solid waste and recycling services are set by the individual haulers.

### **Enforcement and Monitoring**

Haulers must provide quarterly tonnage and franchise fee reports to verify compliance with city's franchise agreements. County landfill reports are also monitored. Waste stream audits of business are a further indication of the effectiveness of the recycling program. Over the last four years, Irvine has conducted onsite waste audits of its largest waste generators. Audits of smaller waste generators are provided on request.



## 8) City of Kingsburg - Commercial Recycling Program to Address Climate Change

**Community: City of Kingsburg (Fresno County)**  
**Population: 11,250**

### Summary

Kingsburg's solid waste ordinance requires uniform recycling services for both residences and businesses and also requires that curbside recycling be provided and used by all customers.

### Program Highlights

- Exclusive franchise agreement requires recycling and green waste bins to be provided to all businesses, residences, and multi-family complexes.
- Businesses can reduce waste collection costs by increased use of recycling bins, resulting in the need for smaller waste containers.
- Indoor and outdoor recycling bins provided to multi-family units.
- Hauler required to submit monthly reports on waste and recycling tonnages.

### Lessons Learned

- It's important to put a lot of effort into educating businesses about recycling before launching a program.
- The more convenient you make recycling, the more recycling happens.

### Resources to Learn More

- City Ordinance (on [city website](#), on left under city departments, see city clerk, municipal code – Ch.18.12.030)
- [Kingsburg Recycling RFP](#)

#### Climate Action Connection

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Providing on-site recycling infrastructure, such as bins for multi-family complexes and green waste makes it easier for residents and businesses to recycle, thus reducing material sent to landfills and the potential generation of methane, a greenhouse gas.

## **The Rest of the Story...**

Kingsburg's interest in recycling pre-dates AB 939, enacted in 1989. As early as the 1980s, local girl scouts picked up bags of newspaper left by the curb for recycling. The city first adopted a mandatory recycling ordinance in 1993. Since that time, recycling services have been uniformly required for all residences and businesses.

Although Kingsburg is a small city, it has approximately 100 businesses, including several large chain retailers that generate substantial waste. An active education and waste audit program, along with strict monitoring of its exclusive hauler, has resulted in a nearly 70 percent citywide diversion rate.

### **Special Encouragement for Multi-Family Complexes**

Two large multi-family complexes are located in Kingsburg. To make recycling convenient and accessible, renters are given five- and 10-gallon bins to source separate recyclables inside their apartments. The complexes may contract for 48- or 96-gallon recycling bins that are placed throughout the complexes for easy accessibility by tenants. These take the place of large roll-off recycling bins that are otherwise located at a few locations in the complex.

### **Enforcement and Compliance**

Businesses in Kingsburg are required to separate recyclables and green waste into separate recycling and green waste bins. To encourage active recycling, the city offers smaller waste disposal bins at lower prices, made possible with greater use of recycling containers. Businesses can use either 48-gallon or 96-gallon recycling containers or larger recycling dumpsters, depending on their needs.

Any new business is informed of the city's recycling requirement at the time the waste collection account is opened. Waste audits are conducted when either the hauler or someone from the city notices a business could improve its recycling rate or when a business requests an audit.

The hauler must submit monthly reports on waste and recycling tonnage to verify the level of recycling taking place. In addition, the city inspects the hauler's facilities every six months to review the quantities of and procedures for recycling materials.



## 9) City of Loomis - Commercial Recycling Program to Address Climate Change

**Community: City of Loomis (Placer County)**

**Population: 6,625**

### Summary

Loomis facilitates commercial recycling through an exclusive franchise agreement that requires the hauler to provide collection bins for cardboard recycling on request to local businesses at no charge. All other waste and recyclables are collected in single stream system and sent to material recovery facility (MRF) for processing.

### Program Highlights

- Hauler required to provide businesses with free bins for onsite cardboard collection, which facilitates additional recycling.
- Remaining waste and recyclables sent to a MRF for separation and processing.
- Tiered fee structure stimulates recycling.

### Lessons Learned

- Targeting recycling opportunities to individual business types can be effective.

### Resources to Learn More

- [City of Loomis Public Works Department](#)
- [Auburn Placer Disposal Service](#)

### The Rest of the Story...

Loomis has had an exclusive franchise agreement for waste collection for the past 30 years. All waste from both residences and businesses in Loomis is collected into a single stream system and sent to a material recovery facility (MRF) where the recyclables are separated, with the remaining waste sent to a landfill.

### Climate Action Connection

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Small programs like this one that provides an incentive for additional cardboard recycling contributes to reducing greenhouse emissions.

About 10 years ago, the hauler suggested to the city that separate collection bins for cardboard, the largest single item generated by businesses, could encourage and facilitate additional cardboard recycling. The franchise agreement between the city and hauler now specifies that free bins for cardboard recycling must be provided to businesses at their request.

### **Tiered Fee Structure Promotes Recycling**

Businesses that request a free cardboard collection container can save substantially on their waste bill. This is especially true for businesses like grocery stores and fast food restaurants that often generate more cardboard than any other waste.

For example, the cost for a three-yard general waste bin is \$208 per month, with weekly pickup. If the customer instead uses a one-yard waste bin, the monthly cost is \$82, with weekly pickup. For many local businesses this reduction is possible by source separating cardboard and using the free bins provided.

Of the 211 businesses in Loomis, 49 have taken advantage of the free cardboard recycling bins. These businesses, mostly grocery stores and restaurants, collectively generated 158 tons of cardboard waste for recycling in 2008.

### **Other Opportunities for Smaller Businesses**

Businesses and residents also may drop-off cardboard and newspapers at a local grocery store. For small businesses that do not generate enough waste to make it feasible to use a smaller waste bin in tandem with a cardboard bin, this centralized service has proven effective. Significant amounts of cardboard and newspaper are being dropped off at the centralized collection site.



## 10) City of Ojai - Commercial Recycling Program to Address Climate Change

**Community: City of Ojai (Ventura County)**  
**Population: 8,150**

### Summary

Ojai facilitates commercial recycling in a downtown redevelopment area through an assessment district that provides common area recycling services and storage bins for businesses that would otherwise lack convenient access to recycling opportunities.

### Program Highlights

- Three-block redevelopment area includes joint assessment district for maintenance, waste and recycling services.
- Assessment district provides common area waste and recycling bins for ease of access by businesses.
- City's exclusive franchise waste hauler offers tiered fee structure to encourage recycling.
- Hauler actively works with tenants to encourage recycling.

### Lessons Learned

- It's tough to increase the rate of commercial recycling when businesses in downtown buildings don't have convenient access to recycling facilities; innovative solutions can help increase recycling.

#### Climate Action Connection

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Innovative solutions to recycling constraints assist businesses reduce the amount of waste going to landfills and the potential for greenhouse gas emissions.

### Resources to Learn More

- City of Ojai [Solid Waste and Recycling Information](#)
- [Arcade Plaza Redevelopment Project](#)

## **The Rest of the Story...**

Ojai encourages commercial recycling through a tiered solid waste and recycling fee structure used by its exclusive franchised hauler. Unfortunately, the tiered fee structure was not sufficient to motivate businesses located in downtown buildings that lacked physical access to nearby recycling facilities. Additionally, most businesses were not willing to store recyclables onsite and transport to recycling facilities that were a considerable distance from their business.

### **New Approach to Make Recycling More Convenient**

With the redevelopment of more than two dozen properties in the three-block downtown redevelopment area, Ojai officials seized the opportunity to address the concerns of businesses that lacked convenient recycling opportunities. The redevelopment and seismic upgrade of the city-owned Arcade building and the adjacent privately owned properties provided the opportunity to design joint enclosures for waste and recycling bins. The result was an enclosed common waste and recycling area. The facilities were funded by the Redevelopment Agency in consultation with local businesses. The Assessment District funds the on-going maintenance (including recycling and trash services) of the area.

### **Hauler and City Actively Promote Recycling**

The city and hauler actively promote recycling through tiered waste fees, visits to businesses, and regular reporting by the hauler. The city hopes that the new joint facilities and services in a significant portion of its downtown will motivate more businesses to increase recycling rates.



## 11) City of Poway - Commercial Recycling Program to Address Climate Change

**Community: City of Poway (San Diego County)**

**Population: 51,100**

### Summary

Poway's solid waste ordinance requires that commercial recycling services be provided by its exclusive solid waste franchisee. A tiered fee structure provides financial incentives to businesses to recycle rather than dispose waste.

### Program Highlights

- City ordinance requires that weekly waste and recycling services be provided to businesses.
- A significant price differential between solid waste and recycling services acts as an incentive for businesses to recycle.
- City and hauler work to educate businesses about the importance of recycling.

### Lessons Learned

- A higher cost differential between waste disposal and recycling services will encourage increased recycling by businesses.

### Resources to Learn More

- [Poway Commercial Recycling](#)
- [Poway Waste Code](#)

### The Rest of the Story...

Commercial recycling has been available in Poway since 1995, but was not mandatory until a few years later when the city adopted an ordinance requiring its exclusive franchised solid waste hauler to provide recycling services to businesses. The ordinance requires businesses to use the recycling services.

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A price differential between waste disposal and recycling services is an incentive to businesses to increase their rate of recycling, thus reducing waste material sent to the landfill and potential greenhouse gas emissions.



Poway recently restructured its utility fees, which has resulted in a considerably steeper price differential between waste and recycling services. Because the fees are tiered according to volume of waste disposal, businesses have a financial incentive to take advantage of lower cost recycling services and recycle more.

For example, weekly service for a three-yard bin is \$126.14 for waste disposal, but only \$37.88 for a same size recycling bin. A new fee structure was also developed for multi-family housing to encourage greater recycling.

### **Education the Key**

Poway relies primarily on the tiered fee structure and on education of businesses to encourage business recycling. If a business appears to need coaching to improve its recycling, it is provided with information about how to make improvements to its recycling efforts. The hauler is required to initiate education outreach with businesses and to conduct waste audits as necessary or as requested by businesses.

### **Enforcement and Compliance**

Businesses are required to contract with the hauler for weekly recycling services. If a business declines, it must demonstrate that it is either self-hauling, using another hauler for recyclables or demonstrate proof that its recyclables are being properly transported to a recycling facility.



## 12) Adopting a Mandatory Commercial Recycling Ordinance: The Experience of the Salinas Valley Solid Waste Authority and Its Member Jurisdictions

**Community: Salinas Valley Solid Waste Authority. Member agencies: cities of Salinas, Greenfield, Gonzales, Soledad, and King City; eastern portion of unincorporated Monterey County. Population: 250,000**

### Summary

Anticipating a new state requirement for businesses to recycle and in alignment with its vision to reduce the amount of waste by promoting individual and corporate responsibility, the Salinas Valley Solid Waste Authority<sup>1</sup> prepared a mandatory recycling ordinance for its six member agencies. The ordinance requires all generators of solid waste, including businesses, multi-family complexes, and local government and school facilities to recycle. Greenfield implemented the ordinance in 2009, followed by the Salinas with a January 1, 2011 implementation date.

In Greenfield, since mandatory commercial recycling became effective, businesses increased the tons of recycled materials collected by 152 percent between 2009 and 2010. At the same time businesses reduced the amount of solid waste being disposed, with commensurate cost savings. Commercial recycling is voluntary in the other member jurisdictions until an implementation date for a mandatory ordinance is designated by resolution

#### Climate Action Connection

Sixty percent of landfill waste is generated by businesses. Promoting commercial recycling helps keep recyclable materials out of landfills. This conserves resources, extends the life of the landfill, saves businesses money and reduces the potential generation of methane, a greenhouse gas that is released from improperly managed landfills.

<sup>1</sup> The Salinas Valley Solid Waste Authority is a Joint Powers Authority that includes the cities of Salinas, Gonzales, Soledad, Greenfield, and King City, plus the eastern portion of unincorporated Monterey County. Individual member jurisdictions contract separately with solid waste and recycling service providers and all have exclusive franchises with the service providers. The Authority is responsible for providing secure long-term solid waste disposal service to all of its members in an environmentally sound and cost-effective manner. To accomplish this goal, the Authority currently owns three closed and one open landfill and two transfer stations, and oversees the contract or operation of these facilities. The Authority is also responsible for overseeing future landfill siting or expansion to meet the area's long-term solid waste disposal needs. The mission of the Authority is "to manage Salinas Valley solid waste as a resource, promoting sustainable, environmentally sound and cost effective practices through an integrated system of waste reduction, reuse, recycling, innovative technology, customer service and education."

of the Authority Board or until California's proposed statewide commercial recycling regulations are adopted.

## Program Highlights

- The Authority's Board of Directors adopted the mandatory recycling ordinance in January 2010. It applies to each of its member agencies. The ordinance becomes effective by resolution of the Authority Board when the member agency and its franchise collector are prepared for implementation. Every generator of solid waste is subject to the ordinance, except federal institutions.
- Initially, two member cities of the Salinas Valley Solid Waste Authority, Greenfield and Salinas, implemented the mandatory recycling ordinance. The other member jurisdictions will either implement the state's proposed commercial recycling regulations when finalized or pursue an effective date for the Authority's recycling ordinance.
- In Greenfield, the tons of materials recycled by businesses increased by 152 percent (2009 compared to 2010). Materials collected included traditional bottles, plastic and cans eligible for California Redemption Value refunds plus paper and cardboard.
- Education and outreach to multi-family communities (apartments) helped to increase recycling rates. One county-wide property manager saved \$72,000 in the first full year after implementing the recycling program.
- Other than staff time to work with the haulers, the cost to the cities to adopt and implement the commercial recycling program was minimal. The development costs for the Mandatory Recycling Ordinance, as well as the costs for all education and outreach activities related to recycling and waste diversion, was part of the Authority's services to its members funded by landfill tipping fees.

"The Institute's sample ordinance, with the flexibility to modify different sections to meet local conditions, was wonderful. It prompted us to explore individual issues so we could focus our thoughts and needs on what would be the best way to meet circumstances in multiple jurisdictions. It was very helpful and made my job easier." – *Susan Warner, Diversion Manager, Salinas Valley Solid Waste Authority*

The Authority and hauler staff speak both English and Spanish in order to reach business owners and apartment managers and tenants. Written materials are available in both English and Spanish as well.

- To date, no enforcement actions have been taken due to lack of compliance by businesses. Education has been effective so far, strengthened by cost saving opportunities. The response by businesses has been good, once they understand what is involved and once they see their first bill with reduced costs.
- Recycling services cost less than solid waste disposal costs in all Salinas Valley Solid Waste Authority jurisdictions. In the three smallest jurisdictions, businesses do not pay for recycling services.

- The Authority used the Institute for Local Government's Sample Commercial Recycling Ordinance, along with other ordinances, in preparing the ordinance for its member agencies. The Institute's sample ordinance, with its extensive commentary, options and flexibility to modify to meet local conditions, helped focus the Authority on key issues to consider.

## Lessons Learned

- Educating businesses and multi-family complex managers is key to increasing recycling quantities, even with a mandatory recycling ordinance.
- The opportunity to save money serves as a major incentive for businesses to recycle.
- One-on-one interaction with businesses and residents and conducting waste assessments increases recycling volumes.
- Reducing disposal costs and opportunities to save money translate into a significant carrot for businesses to participate.
- Having a minimum impact on business is helpful. For example, if a waste assessment recommendation includes having a covered recycling enclosure, it is helpful to work with permitting agencies (such as cities or the county) to streamline the permitting process. Key is to show the business that the cost savings from recycling will pay for the enclosure retrofits and that the permitting process is easy.
- Having consistent, uniform requirements regionally or statewide sometimes is helpful in moving ahead to increase commercial recycling.
- Having an understanding of applicable municipal (or county) codes and franchise agreement is critical in order to identify and resolve potential conflicts during the ordinance development.

## Resources to Learn More

- [Salinas Valley Solid Waste Authority](#)
- [Salinas Valley Solid Waste Authority Commercial Ordinance](#)
- [Multi-Family Information in Spanish](#)

## The Rest of the Story ...

In January, 2010, the Salinas Valley Solid Waste Authority, a joint powers authority consisting of five cities and the eastern portion of unincorporated Monterey County, adopted a mandatory recycling ordinance for all of its member agencies. The ordinance covers all generators, including residential, commercial, and multi-family residences. Traditional beverage containers (those covered by California's beverage container recycling law), cardboard and paper, bagged plastic bags and plastics 1-7, construction and demolition material and yard waste make up the materials included in the ordinance. Food waste and compostable materials can be added once there is a facility within the County permitted to accept and process these materials.

The Solid Waste Authority plans to phase-in adoption of the ordinance by member agencies in order to provide time to work with haulers and member agencies to harmonize franchise agreement provisions, give the haulers time to gear up in order to provide signage and containers (such as for multi-family apartments), allow time to evaluate the impact on revenues from reduced disposal fees, and to develop an alternative revenue model. Once the experiences and performance of the program in Greenfield and Salinas can be evaluated, the Authority will consider expanding it to other member agencies.

### **Initial Two Cities Implement Mandatory Commercial Recycling**

The City of Greenfield adopted a mandatory commercial recycling program about six months before the Solid Waste Authority adopted its ordinance. Greenfield's implementation plan was completed to be in compliance with AB 939, the California Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989, under a compliance order from the California Integrated Waste Management Board (now CalRecycle).

Salinas, the largest city in the Authority, began implementing the ordinance in January 2010. It generates about 62 percent of the waste produced by the Authority's member agencies. Salinas implemented the recycling ordinance at the same time it was renegotiating its franchise agreement with its hauler. The timing made it possible to align the language of the franchise agreement with the language of the ordinance.

### **Education and Outreach Limits Need for Enforcement and Compliance**

As part of the education effort, the Solid Waste Authority developed downloadable signage samples that businesses and multi-family complexes can use to help understand what materials to put in which bins. The haulers also help with education activities with businesses. The best message to educate businesses is the money they will save by recycling more and disposing of less. For example, in the first full year after participating in the city's mandatory recycling program, one county-wide property manager saved \$72,000 in disposal costs.

The Authority contacts businesses and multi-family complexes directly to offer assistance, including waste assessments. It also responds to requests for waste assessments. One-on-one interaction is most effective, with the carrot to recycle being the reduction in disposal costs. The staff of both the Authority and hauler include individuals who speak Spanish and English and most of Authority's the printed information is available in Spanish and English.

The Authority used a grant from the California Department of Conservation to provide education and outreach activities to residents in multi-family communities, resulting in a very high recycling rate in apartment communities. For example, in one 100 unit complex, 85 units sent residents to participate in a fiesta celebrating the kick-off for its recycling program.

The franchised hauler funds the cost of one recycling coordinator and one enforcement officer in Salinas. Very few if any enforcement and compliance actions have been needed, though, since education and technical assistance have proven to be effective. Individual member agencies handle enforcement of their ordinances and voluntary recycling programs through language in the franchise agreements.

The compliance language relates to contamination of recyclable material collection. Most agencies use a “3-strikes” type of compliance system. With the first strike the business receives a notice. With the second strike, the business receives another notice. With the third strike, the hauler can refuse to collect the recyclable material container or, can take the container’s contents and charge the generator based upon the significantly higher solid waste rate.

### **Hauler Responsibilities**

As part of the franchise agreements, haulers provide signage to their customers and educate them about the need to recycle. The haulers must report information about tonnages collected and material types to the Solid Waste Authority monthly. Before adoption of the ordinances, the haulers provided this information voluntarily and as part of the different franchise agreements with the cities.

### **Results So Far**

- Solid waste authority and city staff report that business response to the new mandatory ordinances has been good, once the businesses understand what is involved, including opportunities to save money. Services offered include waste assessments, information about recycling opportunities and recommendations about how to reduce waste and increase recycling. When the first month’s bill arrives, the business owner sees the real financial benefits of recycling.
- With just over one year of experience in Greenfield and about four months experience in Salinas, recycling rates are significantly higher, disposal rates are significantly reduced, and businesses are saving money. This is a result of the mandatory recycling ordinances, combined with the extensive education and outreach activities and lower recycling rates compared to disposal rates.
- Greenfield saw a 152 percent increase in tonnages of recyclable materials collected between 2009 and 2010, at a time when the total number of commercial customers declined.
- One county-wide multi-family complex property manager saved \$72,000 in the first full year of recycling due to reduced disposal costs.
- Detailed information about tonnages recycled will be available from the Authority in mid-2011.



## 13) Adopting a Mandatory Commercial Recycling Ordinance: The Experience of the City of San Carlos

**Community: City of San Carlos (San Mateo County)**  
**Population: 28,400**

### Summary

In April 2010, the City of San Carlos adopted a mandatory commercial recycling ordinance that requires businesses and apartment complexes with five or more units that generate two cubic yards or more of trash a week to recycle. The ordinance will be phased in over two years and includes all types of recyclable materials, special events, food waste and green waste. It was adopted after extensive consultation with the business community (which supported the ordinance) and includes an extensive outreach program to educate businesses. The effective date of the ordinance was January 2011. San Carlos is still compiling information about quantities of recyclable materials collected, trash disposed as a result of the ordinance, and savings to businesses.

#### Climate Action Connection

Sixty percent of landfill waste is generated by businesses. Promoting commercial recycling helps keep recyclable materials out of landfills. This conserves resources, extends the life of the landfill, saves businesses money and reduces the potential generation of methane, a greenhouse gas that is released from improperly managed landfills.

### Program Highlights

- After extensive consultation with the business community, San Carlos adopted a mandatory commercial recycling ordinance in early 2010. The ordinance covers all businesses that produce two or more cubic yards of trash a week (and multi-family communities of five or more units).
- Businesses in San Carlos were very supportive of the city's efforts to move from a voluntary to a mandatory recycling program. Many businesses were motivated to support the ordinance because it was a locally designed program as opposed to a potential statewide mandate.
- In San Carlos, the cost to recycle is free; the cost for waste collection and disposal is based upon the size of the container.
- The city's exclusive solid waste service provider (Recology) and regional solid waste joint powers authority (Rethink Waste) provide the majority of outreach and education activities to

reach businesses, including waste assessments and recommendations, community workshops and events, program branding (“Biz Smart”) and informational videos.

- The ordinance’s start date (July 1, 2010) and voluntary phase coincided with a “Commercial Marketing Blitz” education and outreach program proposed by the new solid waste provider. This provided additional resources and support to launch the new ordinance.
- The ordinance includes a three-step enforcement and compliance process beginning with a courtesy letter and increasing to fines for repeated non-compliance.

## Lessons Learned

- Involving key stakeholders is critical. Take time to talk to businesses early in the process and let the business community help shape the ordinance from the beginning.
- You might be surprised at the feedback you get; in San Carlos, the feedback was not what was expected. Businesses wanted broader coverage – that is, more businesses and material types included – and faster implementation.
- Work with the haulers and other partners to identify key stakeholders and develop a comprehensive outreach plan during the development and implementation stages.
- Much of what is needed to make the program work can be addressed through hauler agreements. Most key issues related to the role of the haulers can be addressed through language in the hauler’s franchise with the city. Be sure to review contract, permit or franchise language carefully so that it and the ordinance are consistent.
- Many key issues related to the role of haulers and material types included in the program can be addressed through language in the hauler’s franchise with the city.
- Each city or county should decide what it needs to do to comply with state law or local needs and decide what type of strategy is best for them – such as whether a mandatory ordinance is necessary or not.
- In the long run, it is worth spending time to educate the business community before formally beginning the program.
- Businesses that may not value “green” or climate change messages as reasons to participate in the program will understand the value of cost savings potential and improvements to their company bottom line as a reason to join the program and recycle.

## Resources to Learn More

- [San Carlos Commercial Recycling Ordinance](#)
- [San Carlos describes getting started \(as part of ILG webinar\)](#)



- [San Carlos Education and Outreach Materials](#)
- [San Carlos describes its outreach and education activities](#) (as part of ILG webinar)
- [San Mateo County Recycle Works](#)
- [Rethink Waste – South Bayside Waste Management Authority](#)
- [Rethink Waste Pilot Mandatory Commercial Recycling Program](#)
- [San Carlos Final Report – Mandatory Commercial Recycling Project – Rethink Waste and Cascadia](#)
- [Highlights from Phase II Meetings in San Carlos – Mandatory Commercial Recycling Ordinance](#)
- [Overview of Stakeholder Process in San Carlos – Rethink Waste](#)

## The Rest of the Story...

In April 2010, after more than a year of development, the City of San Carlos adopted a mandatory commercial recycling ordinance. All businesses (and apartment complexes with five or more units)<sup>2</sup> that generate two cubic yards or more of trash a week must recycle. Before adoption of the ordinance, recycling by businesses in San Carlos was voluntary. The ordinance covers all material types and includes special events. The city's solid waste and recycling franchise agreement specifies that recycling is free in San Carlos and waste collection costs are based upon the size of the container.

San Carlos uses an exclusive franchise system for both residential and commercial solid waste and recycling services. The city awards the franchise, which is then managed through a Joint Powers Authority (the South Bayside Waste Management Authority).<sup>3</sup> The city's adoption of the new commercial recycling ordinance coincided with the selection of a new exclusive hauler (Recology) to provide solid waste and recycling collection services to residents and businesses. The July 1, 2010 effective date of the ordinance and the start of the voluntary phase of the ordinance matched the rollout of an education and outreach effort called a "Marketing Blitz" to the commercial sector in San Carlos by the new hauler. This enabled the city to maximize the value and effectiveness of the new ordinance, and provided additional resources and support to launch the new ordinance.

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<sup>2</sup> Apartment complexes with four or fewer units are covered under the city's residential recycling program.

<sup>3</sup> Formed in 1982, the South Bayside Waste Management Authority (RethinkWaste) is a joint powers authority with twelve member agencies (the cities of Belmont, Burlingame, East Palo Alto, Foster City, Menlo Park, Redwood City, San Carlos and San Mateo, the towns of Atherton and Hillsborough, the County of San Mateo and the West Bay Sanitary District) in San Mateo County. The primary goal of RethinkWaste is to provide cost effective waste reduction, recycling, and solid waste programs to member agencies through franchised services and other recyclers to meet and sustain a minimum of 50% diversion of waste from landfill as mandated by California State Law, AB 939. [www.rethinkwaste.org/](http://www.rethinkwaste.org/)

While developing the ordinance, San Carlos looked at what other cities were doing and reviewed the ordinances of several cities of similar size.

San Carlos is phasing-in its commercial recycling ordinance over a two year period.

- Between July 1, 2010 and December 31, 2010, the city and its hauler undertook an extensive education and outreach program to provide information about the ordinance to the business community. Participation by businesses was voluntary.
- Beginning January 2011, all covered businesses are required to source separate recyclable materials, except for organic materials.
- Beginning January 2012, restaurants, food service businesses, and special events will be required to separate out organic materials.

### **Stakeholder Involvement in Development Phase Critical to Success**

In the first phase of the ordinance development, San Carlos conducted extensive outreach to the business community. This occurred during the year prior to the ordinance's adoption. The outreach focused on educating the business community about the need for the ordinance, including letting the business community know about the concepts being considered. At the same time, the city gathered input from businesses and key stakeholders on what should be included in the ordinance. Outreach involved such groups as the Chamber of Commerce and service organizations, as well as one-on-one meetings with key businesses, and a survey of businesses in San Carlos. About 350 of the city's 2,000 businesses were contacted. The second phase of the outreach focused on gathering input about what might be included in the ordinance itself, based upon themes identified during the first phase.

Based upon the outreach conducted, San Carlos learned the following about how businesses viewed the concept of a mandatory commercial recycling ordinance.

- Businesses were generally very supportive of moving ahead with an ordinance. Many businesses already were recycling voluntarily.
- Businesses preferred emphasizing education rather than enforcement.
- Businesses responded well to receiving basic information about what might be included in the ordinance, as a way of responding to misinformation or misunderstandings.
- Businesses preferred that the mandatory recycling program begin sooner rather than later and be phased-in over a faster time frame than initially proposed by the city.
- Businesses appreciated the ability to be involved early in the development of the ordinance.
- Many businesses were motivated to support the ordinance by being able to have a locally developed program, as opposed to having to comply with a state mandate.
- Many San Carlos businesses already embraced "green" values. San Carlos has the largest number of businesses (30) that have been certified by the Association of Bay Area Governments' Green Business program in San Mateo County. ([www.greenbiz.ca.gov/](http://www.greenbiz.ca.gov/))

## Educating Businesses to Recycle

San Carlos's business recycling program relies heavily upon educating businesses. Because recycling is free, while the cost of collection and disposal of waste is based upon the size of the collection bin, businesses can save money by recycling more and disposing less.

The city's new hauler will contact every business and multi-family community to provide waste assessments and recommendations to reduce waste and increase recycling. Specific outreach and education activities include a recycling media "blitz", community workshops and events, program branding ("Biz Smart"), and informational videos. (See examples of San Carlos's educational activities under "Resources to Learn More").

City and ReThink Waste (South Bayside Waste Management Authority) staff, along with consultants, work with the hauler to provide outreach and technical assistance. This includes identifying firms that need education and assistance to increase their participation in recycling programs and businesses that are litter or trash "hot spots" where increased pickup and recycling will improve the appearance of a business/store front and the community.

## Role of the Hauler

As indicated previously, San Carlos's exclusive solid waste and recycling services provider will contact each business to offer waste assessments and recommendations. In addition, the hauler provides monthly and quarterly information about recycling tonnages collected consistent with provisions in the franchise agreement between the city and hauler. The hauler also plays a role in the enforcement and compliance system (see below).

## Enforcement and Compliance System

San Carlos recycling ordinances uses a three-step enforcement process to promote compliance.

**Step 1: Courtesy notice.** (First violation) A written notice is attached to the garbage bin if recyclable materials are mixed with trash. Before or at the same time the hauler prepares the written courtesy notice, the hauler's representative may talk with the customer to educate him or her about recycling requirements and options.

**Step 2: Warning letter.** (Second violation) The city sends a notice to the customer to inform him or her that they are out of compliance and could be fined.

**Step 3: Fines.** (Third and subsequent violations) The city fines repeat offenders on a graduated scale (\$100 for the first offense; \$250 for the second; \$500 for the third).

The hauler provides quarterly reports to the city about enforcement actions, as per the franchise agreement.

## **Cost to City**

City costs to date include staff time to develop the ordinance, including education and outreach activities. To minimize additional costs, the city is using existing staff to monitor the program. The city envisions using its Code Enforcement program for enforcement if and when that becomes necessary.

## **Results So Far**

- Since the mandatory phase of the program began in January 2011, San Carlos is gathering preliminary information about quantities of recyclables collected and reductions in solid waste disposed, as well as cost savings to businesses.
- Because of the extensive pre-ordinance outreach activities, the education message associated with the program has resonated with businesses. Businesses clearly understand the recycling requirements, why the city adopted the ordinance and the potential cost benefits to businesses.
- While the ordinance is still in the honeymoon phase, the reaction from the business community so far is positive. Where there have been concerns about business compliance that does not meet the requirements of the ordinance, the hauler works with the individual business to explain the program and promote compliance. As a result, no enforcement actions have been taken since the program became mandatory.
- The city has set up a system to respond to “hot spots” of problems, either from business complaints, litter accumulation or other issues. The goal is to respond quickly before a small problem turns into a larger one.



## **Stories about Education and Outreach Activities**



## 14) Commercial Recycling Education and Outreach Activities – Focus on Alameda County Waste Management Authority

**Community: County of Alameda, 14 cities and 2 special districts**  
**Population: 1,575,000 (includes both county and cities)**

### Summary

The Alameda County Waste Management Authority/Source Reduction and Reduction Board, also known as StopWaste.Org, is a Joint Powers Authority in Alameda County.<sup>4</sup> Its members include the county, the fourteen cities in the county and two special districts that provide solid waste and recycling services. Its education activities to encourage businesses to recycle include technical assistance for waste prevention and recycling, targeted outreach and assistance to large businesses, online resources and assistance for smaller businesses, grants to businesses, and a high profile recognition program for businesses that recycle.

#### Climate Action Connection

Sixty percent of landfill waste is generated by businesses. Promoting commercial recycling helps keep recyclable materials out of landfills. This conserves resources, extends the life of the landfill, saves businesses money and reduces the potential generation of methane, a greenhouse gas that is released from improperly managed landfills.

### Highlights

- StopWaste.Org substantially supplements the amount of commercial recycling and organics outreach activities that its member agencies do. StopWaste.Org focuses on the larger generators who generate 70 percent of the county's commercial waste stream. Within its member agencies, the cost to recycle is lower than the cost of disposal, providing a financial incentive to businesses.
- The StopWaste Business Partnership works with a consulting firm to provide technical assistance to businesses, emphasizing that they can often help the businesses save money on their trash bill. A key message is "We are here to help businesses save money and increase efficiency."
- The StopWaste Business Partnership offers businesses producing 15 cubic yards or more of waste and recyclable materials a week technical assistance through a site visit and waste assessment. It also offers other services, such as loans and grants, to other business.

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<sup>4</sup> StopWaste.Org promotes waste reduction and recycling through its Green Building, Bay Friendly Gardening and Landscaping programs, as well as by working with local school districts, and the StopWaste Business Partnership.

- The StopWaste Business Partnership places a high value on recognition and hosts an annual recognition event, as well as a print and web-based media campaign to recognize businesses and their employees who recycle.

## Lessons Learned

- The more you speak the language of business, the more comfortable business decision-makers will be when considering devoting their time to work with agency staff. It is better to talk about the benefits to the business (such as saving money, or increasing the business's competitive advantage), rather than just a description of the service offered (such as "recycling technical assistance" or "waste reduction.").
- Gentle persistence is critical. If at first a company does not respond to efforts to engage with them, keep them on your target list and touch base every 3-6 months, especially if you know they are a large generator.
- Having a good relationship with the commercial haulers/recyclers is key. It is important to specify what kind of education to the commercial community is expected from the haulers.

## Where to Go for More Info

- [StopWaste.Org website](#)
- [StopWaste Business Partnership.Org](#)
- [Alameda County Green Business Program](#)

## The Rest of the Story...

The Alameda County Waste Management Authority is a public agency formed in 1976 by a Joint Exercise of Powers Agreement among the County of Alameda, the fourteen cities within the county, and the two sanitary districts that provide refuse and recycling collection services.<sup>5</sup> Many refer to the Authority by its popular name, StopWaste.Org.

StopWaste.Org's business assistance activities focus on education, outreach, and technical assistance. The permitting and franchising of solid waste haulers is handled directly by the individual cities and the two special districts. In most Alameda county jurisdictions, the cost to

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<sup>5</sup> The Alameda County Waste Management Authority is responsible for preparation of the Alameda County Integrated Waste Management Plan and Alameda County Hazardous Waste Management Plan. The Alameda County Source Reduction and Recycling Board (Recycling Board) was created in 1990 by the voters of Alameda County through a ballot initiative. The eleven-member board includes six citizen experts appointed by the Alameda County Board of Supervisors and five elected officials from the Alameda County Waste Management Authority.

The Authority manages a long-range program for development of solid waste facilities and offers a wide variety of other programs in the areas of source reduction and recycling, market development, technical assistance and public education. Funding is provided by per ton disposal and waste import mitigation fees. The Recycling Board is responsible for programs that promote source reduction, residential and commercial recycling, recycled product procurement and market development. Program funding is provided from a per ton disposal surcharge at the Altamont and Vasco Road landfills.

recycle is lower than the cost of disposal, thus providing a financial incentive to businesses to recycle.

### **Services Offered to Save Money**

Close collaboration with recycling coordinators in each member agency and with the haulers help identify large generators for follow-up assistance by the StopWaste Business Partnership team. Partnership staff, along with a small team of consultants, identify the largest business and institutional generators of waste and work with them to provide technical and financial assistance. In some cases, making the initial contact and finding the right person in a business is a challenge. However, once the initial connection is made, the education effort focuses on increasing efficiency and saving money for the business. Participating businesses sign a letter of understanding, which acts as a commitment, or pledge, to work with StopWaste.Org to implement waste reduction recommendations.

For businesses that generate more than 15 cubic yards of waste a week, such as manufacturing facilities, hospitals, large schools, or commercial buildings, StopWaste.Org offers a site visit. The outcome of these on-site waste assessments is a report that recommends waste reduction opportunities, starting with easy-to-implement strategies (so called “low-hanging fruit”) and evolving into more complex strategies for reducing waste at the source. The StopWaste Business Partnership team also offers support finding markets and vendors for less common recyclable materials. Gentle persistence is used to keep the relationship alive over time.

Besides technical assistance, StopWaste.Org offers financial assistance to businesses of all sizes to help them increase recycling. This includes mini-grants (up to \$5,000) to get started or prepare education materials for employees, competitive waste prevention grants (\$10,000 to \$70,000), and low interest loans.

Resources and assistance for smaller businesses include eligibility to receive mini-grants, online waste audit guidance and eligibility to receive recognition through Alameda County’s green business program. All businesses can take advantage of StopWaste.Org’s robust library of online resources, how-to guides, and case studies covering various waste reduction practices.

### **Getting the Message Out**

StopWaste.Org gets its message out to the business community through a variety of means, including:

- An e-newsletter sent four times a year to about 1,500 businesses, reminding them of the services available.
- A robust website that describes the services available, including financial resources.
- Partnership with chambers of commerce in the county and individual cities, including green links on the chambers’ websites to StopWaste.Org and participation in chamber activities (including newsletters and roundtables).



- Hosting a marketing ad campaign that allows businesses and their employees (such as facilities managers) to get recognition, such as in trade magazines, for their waste reduction and recycling efforts.
- Developing a social media campaign.

### **Recognition Is Critical**

StopWaste.Org places a high value on recognition and devotes time each year to hosting a recognition event. Each year, ten to thirteen businesses that have made great strides receive awards. The event is well attended by businesses, local elected officials and economic development groups. StopWaste.Org also supports the county's Green Business certification program to recognize smaller businesses.



## 15) Commercial Recycling Education and Outreach Activities – Focus on City of Kingsburg

**Community: City of Kingsburg (Fresno County)**

**Population: 11,250**

### Summary

Kingsburg works closely with its solid waste and recycling service provider that has an exclusive franchise to serve Kingsburg to educate businesses about how to comply with the city's mandatory commercial recycling requirements.

### Program Highlights

- Kingsburg requires its solid waste and recycling service provider to conduct regular waste audits for commercial customers and provide monthly reports to the city on recycling tonnages to identify businesses that could improve recycling compliance and performance.
- Outreach to businesses is handled one-on-one between hauler and business owner using a friendly approach rather than a punitive one.
- The solid waste and recycling service provider encourages those businesses not in compliance with the city's mandatory recycling ordinance to reduce their solid waste collection costs by recycling more. This results in the need for smaller waste collection containers, thus saving the business money, since recycling collection service is less expensive than garbage collection service.

### Climate Action Connection

Sixty percent of landfill waste is generated by businesses. Promoting commercial recycling helps keep recyclable materials out of landfills. This conserves resources, extends the life of the landfill, saves businesses money and reduces the potential generation of methane, a greenhouse gas that is released from improperly managed landfills.

### Lessons Learned

- Using a direct, in-person approach to encourage recycling is more effective than mailing a brochure or flyer or issuing a citation for non- or under-compliance.
- When approaching businesses, be as friendly as possible rather than heavy-handed.
- Businesses, especially those that are part of large chains, are responsive to the opportunity to save money and help the environment.
- For non-English speaking business owners, using someone who speaks the same language and is knowledgeable about the city's recycling requirements is more likely to stimulate recycling and meeting the city's recycling requirements.

## Resources to Learn More

- [Kingsburg Mandatory Recycling Ordinance](#) (on city website, on left under city departments, see city clerk, municipal code – Ch.18.12.030)
- [Kingsburg Recycling RFP](#)
- [Kingsburg commercial recycling story](#)

## The Rest of the Story...

Although Kingsburg is a small city, it has approximately 100 businesses, including several large chain retailers, that generate substantial waste. An active education and waste audit program by the city's exclusive waste hauler, along with monitoring by the city of the hauler, produced a nearly 70 percent reduction in waste disposal citywide. Businesses can reduce waste collection costs by increased use of recycling bins. This results in the need for smaller waste collection containers, thus saving the businesses money, since recycling collection service is less expensive than garbage collection service.

The city's solid waste and recycling service provider informs any new business about the city's recycling requirement at the time the waste collection account is opened. The city requires the hauler to provide businesses and apartment complexes with recycling and green waste containers. The hauler offers waste audits to a business when either the hauler or someone from the city notices it could improve its recycling rate or when a business requests an audit.

In addition, the hauler or city staff may approach a business to encourage the business to comply with the city's ordinance or improve its recycling activities. This includes offering the business a waste audit, which not only identifies how recycling can be increased, but also looks at the unique materials thrown away that might otherwise be recycled to the financial advantage of the business. For example, a local tool and dye manufacturer learned that the metal it was tossing out could be recycled in return for cash.

Kingsburg began working with the local Conservation Corps to provide recycling services at local high school athletic events and at six big festivals held in the city each year. The Conservation Corps not only provides recycling bins and removes them, but educates the public during the event on what to place in the recycling containers.



## 16) Commercial Recycling Education and Outreach Activities – Focus on San Diego’s Multi-Family Community Program

**Community: San Diego (San Diego County)**  
**Population: 1,300,000**

### Summary

The City of San Diego’s mandatory recycling ordinance (adopted in November 2007) requires businesses to recycle, including both large and small multi-family apartment. To achieve compliance, the city works hand-in-hand with haulers through franchise agreements, as well as with apartment property managers, to offer technical assistance and education about recycling, including site visits to multi-family units. The city also requires annual written communication between property owners and tenants and onsite signage to encourage tenants to properly recycle specified materials.

### Program Highlights

- The city offers extensive recycling information on its website and hand delivers packets with recycling requirements tailored to multi-family complexes (apartments and condominiums).
- The city offers technical assistance by both city recycling staff and haulers to property managers to help establish and monitor placement of recycling containers, signage, and conduct tenant outreach.
- Haulers are required to have at least one person on staff who can speak knowledgeably about the city’s recycling requirements.
- The city conducts ongoing code enforcement activities at multi-family complexes to verify compliance with minimum mandatory recycling requirements and to identify complexes that have subscribed to recycling services. Although fines up to \$1,000 can be assessed for noncompliance, the city relies primarily on educational engagement, which has resulted in good cooperation from multi-family property managers.

#### Climate Action Connection

Sixty percent of landfill waste is generated by businesses. Promoting commercial recycling helps keep recyclable materials out of landfills. This conserves resources, extends the life of the landfill, saves businesses money and reduces the potential generation of methane, a greenhouse gas that is released from improperly managed landfills.

## Lessons Learned

- Working with a wide variety of stakeholders early on helps immensely to ensure all stakeholders' concerns are heard, and to the maximum extent possible, incorporated into the final ordinance. It is then possible to enlist stakeholder support for the recycling program.
- Working directly with property owners and managers is effective in promoting a better understanding of how to implement the city's recycling requirements.
- Using franchise agreements as a tool to require haulers to provide recycling services for multi-family units creates a better climate of cooperation in implementing the city's recycling ordinance.

## Resources to Learn More

- [San Diego multi-family recycling requirements](#)
- [How to set up multi-family recycling in San Diego](#)
- [Educational Toolkit](#)
- [Sample outreach letter to tenants](#)
- [Model apartment lease recycling language](#)
- [San Diego Recycling Ordinance](#)
- [Hear about San Diego's commercial recycling program, presented during an ILG webinar in 2010.](#)

## The Rest of the Story...

The City of San Diego's mandatory recycling ordinance, adopted in November 2007, requires residents in all multi-family complexes to recycle. All multi-family complexes with 50 or more units must recycle a minimum of 40 percent of the total collection service capacity for recycled material. Multi-family complexes with fewer than 50 units must recycle a minimum of 30 percent of total collection service capacity for recycled material.

Reaching capacity limits at the Miramar Landfill, the City of San Diego pursued inclusion of commercial businesses and the nearly 227,000 multi-family units in the city into its recycling program. After meetings with stakeholder groups,<sup>6</sup> the city's recycling ordinance took effect in January 2008 and was phased in over a two-year period. Prior to this, the city offered recycling services only to single-family residences and small multi-family complexes, while private haulers provided recycling services to businesses and larger multi-family complexes on a voluntary subscription basis.

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<sup>6</sup> Stakeholders included the San Diego County Apartment Association, the Chamber of Commerce, Building Owners and Managers Association, International Facility Management Association, San Diego County Taxpayers Association, and California Restaurant Association San Diego County.

After expansion of the commercial recycling program, along with implementation of a construction and demolition (C&D) debris deposit ordinance and a surcharge on C&D debris at the City's Miramar Landfill, the citywide disposal reduction rate climbed from 55 percent in 2006 to 66 percent by 2009. Similarly, refuse service measured in cubic yards and subscribed to by both commercial businesses and multi-family complexes decreased by 10 percent from 2008 to 2010, while recycling services increased by 76 percent. The city's mandatory recycling requirements, plus heavy educational outreach, produced the significant increase in recycling at multi-family complexes.

### **Program Elements**

City staff and haulers are both responsible for educating property managers about recycling compliance. City code enforcement officers monitor recycling efforts throughout multi-family units to both improve compliance where recycling exists and to bring those complexes without recycling services into compliance. Packets with information about how to set up onsite recycling are delivered by city staff directly to multi-family properties.

Property managers must annually notify all tenants by mail about recycling requirements, including location of bins, materials to recycle, and mandatory compliance with the ordinance. Haulers, through their franchise agreements, are required to work with multi-family complexes to ensure compliance. The city offers extensive information and outreach materials, including sample letters to tenants, signage requirements, container specification, information on how to set up onsite recycling, and more.

Each month, the city highlights a multi-family recycler of the month. It also gives annual awards to complexes that have exemplary participation in the recycling program. The city's website features success stories as well. All of the educational outreach to encourage compliance with the city's commercial recycling ordinance emphasizes that compliance is mandatory and that increased recycling often reduces cost of disposal services overall, as recycling typically costs approximately 25 percent less than disposal services in San Diego.

### **Partnering with Apartment Association**

In partnership with the San Diego County Apartment Association, the city made available 45,000 woven bags with imprinted recycling information for distribution by haulers and property managers for compact, in-unit collection of recyclable materials. This was enough to reach 20 percent of multi-family units. In addition, the San Diego County Apartment Association provides voluntary model lease addendum language for use by property owners to convey the city's recycling requirements to tenants.



**Story about Organics –  
Commercial Food Waste Program**



## 17) Creating a Successful Restaurant Food Scrap Recycling Program - Lessons Learned from the Eight City Regional Partnership Program in Orange County

**Community: Regional partnership among eight cities in Orange County: Aliso Viejo, Dana Point, Laguna Niguel, Laguna Hills, Tustin, San Juan Capistrano, San Clemente, Rancho Santa Margarita**  
**Combined Population: 426,275**

### Summary

A typical restaurant disposes more than 50 tons of organic waste annually, representing a significant portion of the waste stream that can be diverted from disposal with a food scrap recycling program. In April 2010, in response to a planned landfill disposal fee increase, eight cities in Orange County, along with the cities' solid waste service provider, began a pilot program to collect and transport restaurant food scraps to a composting facility. The program was funded by a grant from the Orange County Waste and Recycling Department.

#### Climate Action Connection

Sixty percent of landfill waste is generated by businesses. Promoting commercial recycling helps keep recyclable materials out of landfills. This conserves resources, extends the life of the landfill, saves businesses money and reduces the potential generation of methane, a greenhouse gas that is released from improperly managed landfills.

### Program Highlights

- Each participating city approached five restaurants that are high food waste generators to participate in the free pilot program.
- Each participating city's recycling coordinator and staff from the solid waste service provider makes regular onsite visits to train restaurant employees to properly separate and contain food waste for recycling.
- The hauler provides the restaurants free indoor and outdoor bins for bi-weekly food scrap collection.
- Over 600 tons of food waste were diverted from the landfill and recycled into compost during the first six months of the pilot program.



- Some participating restaurants reduced the amount of food waste going to disposal, and thus their monthly solid waste collection bill, by 50 percent.
- The pilot program was funded by a \$400,000 grant from the Orange County Waste and Recycling Department.

## Lessons Learned

- Financial incentives are important for restaurants to take the food scrap recycling program seriously. Restaurants that pay their own waste disposal bills are typically more interested in food scrap recycling to reduce solid waste collection costs.
- It's important to thoroughly train restaurant management and employees to collect food waste and use the bins provided. Both management and employees benefit from periodic, ongoing coaching.
- The greater the support by restaurant management for the recycling effort, the more successful the effort by the employees, thus resulting in more food scraps recycled and cost savings.
- Working together as a regional effort is important to help solve common problems with a new recycling program.

## Resources to Learn More

- [Educational brochure, food waste recycling](#)
- [Participating restaurants in south Orange County food waste recycling program](#)
- [San Clemente food waste recycling program](#)
- [Laguna Hills food waste recycling program](#)
- [Aliso Viejo food waste recycling program](#)
- [Dana Point food waste recycling program](#)
- [Laguna Niguel food waste recycling program](#)
- [San Juan Capistrano food waste recycling program](#)
- [Rancho Santa Margarita food waste recycling program](#)
- [Orange County Organics Diversion Pilot Programs Comparison, AWWA Reporter, March 2011](#)

## The Rest of the Story...

In 2009, faced with a 32 percent increase in landfill disposal fees, the City of Laguna Hills met with its exclusive solid waste and recycling service provider to discuss new recycling options. In Laguna Hills, restaurant food waste represents a large segment of waste disposed at landfills. A restaurant typically disposes over 50 tons of organic waste per year, representing 40-45 percent of its annual waste. Thus, Laguna Hills decided to explore a restaurant food waste recycling program.

After initial success with a trial group of restaurants, Laguna Hills and neighboring cities of Aliso Viejo, Dana Point, Laguna Niguel, Tustin, San Juan Capistrano, San Clemente, and Rancho Santa Margarita decided to take advantage of a grant program that would enable them to jointly undertake a food waste recycling program. All eight cities use the same exclusive hauler and all have a voluntary commercial recycling program. These cities and their solid waste service provider, CR&R, together applied for and received a \$400,000 grant from the Orange County Waste and Recycling Department to coordinate a joint regional food scrap recycling program. It mainly involved restaurants, but also a few other food-related businesses. San Clemente served lead city for the project. The participating cities primarily sought restaurants to participate in the pilot program that were the largest food waste generators. They focused on restaurants responsible for paying their own solid waste collection bills that would have a greater, direct financial incentive to save on waste collection costs. In addition to restaurants, the pilot program also included some hotels, markets and a farmers market held weekly at the Laguna Hills Mall.

The pilot program, which is voluntary and free to the participating restaurants and other food-related businesses, involves considerable mentoring by the recycling staff. For example, the food-related businesses receive free indoor and outdoor bins for food scrap collection. Posters and flyers help restaurants educate and remind their staff on proper collection of food waste. In addition, regular visits to the restaurants and food businesses by city and hauler staff helped to stimulate ongoing participation.

In-house recycling coordinators in each participating city initiated and monitor participation. In fact, having a lead staff person in each city is a key element to the program's success. In addition, CR&R allocates staff time on a regular basis to monitor the quality (contamination level) of recycled food waste and keep statistics on recycling volumes. The eight cities meet monthly with a representative from the hauler to review the status of the program and share data on the amount of recycled food waste collected.

Since the joint program began in April 2010, participating restaurants in San Clemente have reduced landfilling over 90 tons of food waste. Participating restaurants in Laguna Hills have reduced landfilling over 120 tons of food waste. Some participating restaurants reduced the amount of food waste going to disposal, and thus their monthly solid waste collection bill, by 50 percent.

The eight cities plan to continue the food scrap recycling program after the grant ends at the end of 2011. At that time, however, they may charge a fee for the recycling service. Analysis is currently underway on a possible fee structure, as well as consideration of whether to expand the food waste recycling program to residential customers.

This compilation of stories is a service of the Institute for Local Government (ILG) whose mission is to promote good government at the local level with practical, impartial, and easy-to-use resources for California communities. ILG is the nonprofit 501(c)(3) research and education affiliate of the League of California Cities and the California State Association of Counties. For more information and to access the Institute's resources on sustainability, go to [www.ca-ilg.org/sustainability](http://www.ca-ilg.org/sustainability).

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