

# County of Santa Clara

Recycling and Waste Reduction Commission  
Integrated Waste Management Division

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## Source Reduction and Recycling Subcommittee Meeting Notes April 2, 2010

Attendance: Clifton Chew, Matt Cucuzza, Cheri Donnelly, Rene Eyerly, Karen Gissibl, Laurel Godley, Ryan Kenny, Mary Lindemuth, Lisa Rose, Lauren Tacke, Kelly Kline

Emily Utter attended via phone

Items were heard out of order.

5. Lisa Rose reported that the Green Business Program had enrolled 72 and certified 81 businesses this fiscal year. The number of certified is larger than enrolled because of recertification and enrollees from the previous fiscal year.

4. Lisa Rose reported that the Home Composting Report was sent out yesterday. Karen Gissibl noted that the City of Sunnyvale had 66 attendees to their workshop. A discussion on bin sales noted that Sunnyvale may eliminate the subsidy and the City of San Jose has reduced the number of sale events from ten to six. Lauren Tacke asked about the placement of advertisements in the local paper.

At this time the subcommittee returned to the regular agenda order.

1. Cheri Donnelly, Chair called the meeting to order and those present introduced themselves.

2. Public Comment

There were no public comments.

3. Round Table Discussion on alternatives to polystyrene food and beverage containers

Ryan Kenny provided an additional handout that was an excerpt from a Seattle Public Utilities consultant report. He wanted to emphasize that in the report, the life cycle analysis for economic and environmental costs were higher when EPS was banned. He said litter was litter when looking at the San Francisco report and that it showed a decrease in plastic bag litter but an equal increase in fiber litter. He also noted that Santa Barbara did not ban EPS since they realized that they did not have an organics program to support the ban. Additionally, alternative products may not be as effective both in cost and function. When bans are talked about the main focus is on food service and not commercial which is unfairly targeting one sector.

**Commissioners:** Jamie McLeod, Chair; Ronit Bryant, Kansen Chu, Jim Griffith, Rosemary Kamei, Evan Low, Cat Tucker, Kris Wang, Curtis Wright, Ken Yeager

Cheri Donnelly responded that litter was not all the same, the ecological impact of plastic is greater than fiber (and noted images of the dead albatross chick in the February RWRC presentation that had plastic bottle caps in its stomach).

Lisa Rose clarified that the RWRC and TAC have not yet directed this subcommittee to pursue a ban on EPS, but rather to investigate alternatives to EPS materials and products should a ban be considered in the future.

Emily Utter said a lifecycle analysis is not enough and that all the environmental impacts, especially those at end of life, need to be evaluated as well.

Rene Eyerly said Palo Alto's ban of expanded polystyrene went into effect today. The City's hauler had collected EPS previously until the market collapsed and have since stopped collecting it. Palo Alto's ban is a tiered approach based on dining in versus take out food. Each sector has a different focus to match with the appropriate recycling program currently available (i.e. dine in would emphasis composting over recycling while take out would emphasis recycling over composting since commercial recycling has a composting component while the residential does not).

The City of Santa Monica invites restaurateurs and other members of the public and local jurisdictions to come to their offices where they have alternative packaging products on display and discuss the pros and cons of various packaging options.

Ryan addressed additional questions about the health effects of heated EPS by saying he will send a report to Lisa to forward to the group by the FDA. He also noted that the ACC is interested in working with Material Recovery Facilities (MRF's) to provide them with densifiers so that they can more easily collect and manage polystyrene. He also noted that the San Jose Flea Market has agreed to try out a densifier at their location and that there may be opportunity for polystyrene collection events. Ryan invited TAC members to tour Timbron in Stockton, one of the companies who buys polystyrene and makes it into new materials.

Kelly Kline talked about business' concern over cost and the effectiveness of the alternative products. Containers for foods with liquids (soups, sauces) are the hardest to replace. Additionally, communication with this sector is very difficult with the high turn over and low margin so that personnel have very little time to research the issue. Participation may increase if a cooperative buy were developed and research provided.

Rene said guidelines for jurisdictions combined with things like policy goals, local processing capabilities, collection system, and lessons learned would help in the decision making process.

4. This item was heard earlier.
5. This item was heard earlier.
6. Adjournment.

Note: The next SRR meeting is schedule for Thursday, May 27 at 9:30AM in Conference Room C, Cupertino City Hall