

AB 939 LOCAL TASK FORCE REGULAR MEETING
Minutes
Thursday, June 13, 2024
12:30 P.M. to 2:00 P.M.
2300 County Center Drive, La Plaza A, Room A212
Santa Rosa, California 95404
Zoom link:

<https://sonomacounty.zoom.us/j/95452631348?pwd=amRpWng4Ykc4YkhCRWV3WEtEb2RxZz09>

Absent (In alphabetical order)	In attendance (In alphabetical order)
<p>Aryam Blanco- Sonoma County Environmental Health Brandon Hart – TPW – Integrated Waste/ Sonoma Casey Fritz- Zero Waste by Sonoma County Greg Carr- 1st district rep Hugo Mata- SOS and LatinX Hub Jennifer Lyle, Sonoma County Joey Hejnowicz, Zero Waste Coordinator - City of Santa Rosa Katie Cushwa- Zero Waste Sonoma Leslye Choate- LEA Luana Pinasco- Committee member Michael LeRusso Michael Anderson- Marketing and Recycling Historian Renee Gundy, city of Santa Rosa Samantha Stevens- County of Sonoma/LEA Sloan Pagal- Zero Waste Sonoma Stephen Zollman- Sebastapol city Sunny Galbraith – 350 Sonoma County, city of Sebastopol Tasha Wright- City of Santa Rosa (Water Dept) Trish Pisenti- Sonoma County</p>	<p>Alyssa Johnson- Sonoma County Resource Recovery Alyssa Messer – 3rd District Rep Amanda Rivers Amber Johnson- Zero Waste Sonoma Arthur Deicke- EPS Bo Duong- Recology Commodities Broker Brian Bauer- Resynergi Celia Furber- Recology Chloe Ballard Town of Windsor Dan Nobel- Association of Compost Producers Danielle Walsh- Sonoma County LEA Emily Harris- Recology J. Glen Morelli – TPW – Integrated Waste Kenny Davis- Resynergi Kristen Sales- Zero waste Kyle LaRue- Director of Zero Waste and Compliance Leslie Lukacs – Zero Waste Sonoma Liz Bortolotto – Chair Mader Brandt Mark Soiland- City of Cotati Representative Max Bridges- League of Women Voters Michael Siminitis- Waste Busters Stu Clark – 4th District Rep Terry Taylor- town of Windsor Taryn Obaid- Climate Seat Xinci Tan – Zero Waste Sonoma (by phone)</p>

1. Welcome & Introductions

2. Approval of draft minutes from April 11, 2024 meeting
Motion to approve minutes
Motion seconded
Motion passed.

3. Guest presentation: Recology Commodities Broker, Bo Duong

Presentation:

Introduction to Bo Duong and his role in recycology. In his role, he aims to collaborate with companies who have a shared mission and values. He has been with Recology for 34 years. It is important for recycling and recycling can save a resource for raw materials and this is progressing towards our mission towards a circular economy.

Some history: Before 1990, there were a lot of paper mills in California, Oregon, and Washington state. China came in during the mid 1990's. There was some competition between China and the paper mills in CA. This resulted in many paper mills closing because of labor costs and they were taking everything regardless of quality. During this time there was a shift but then papers would result in formally different categories being mixed together. It was observed that there was a perceived increase in recycled materials when mixed together. In 2015, China had a policy come out that would change how they would recycle. Most of the stuff that they were producing impacted the whole world because China usually allowed international organizations to ship anything. With this change, where did the paper go- many of these surrounding countries received the paper to recycle but there was an issue with the materials being dirty and this created a need to change the sorting equipment and standards of impurity (they are allowing 2% of impurity). Even at one point Recology was shipping outwards, but have done their due diligence to make sure the companies being shipped to are legitimate company and complies with requirements and standards. For the paper mill, they are doing a good job of everything they do and they purposely go through the machine. Now everything else that is mixed in the paper recycling is pulled out of the recycling process. Anything that they can use are pulled and sorted. Even the water treatment, the water goes through a process to sustain the fish life [NOT SURE]. Currently shipping paper to other surrounding Asian countries, but plastic is shipped elsewhere (Mexico, US, Canada). Because of the pollution of plastic in the ocean, but the problem is that in this world with 198 countries that a handful of countries did not sign (including the US). However, recycology made the decision that they don't want to export out materials that contribute to larger pollution.

Questions:

About the material going to Mexico, some reports that they plastic materials are being incinerated instead of being new products. *Many countries out there are trying to be creative with how they will use these materials, but we are skeptical with working with that. Recycology partners with organizations that do traditional recycology. When recycology visits these sites this is something they assess when they do onsite visits to make sure they are legitimate company.*

Do you have a sense of the number of materials being recycled- *that number is hard, but what I can tell you is that with our state of the art technology but what we produce most is paper and cardboard (around 75%). 15% is glass, 10% is metal. When people are adhering to the program and putting in the target recycling (1, 2, 5), those are getting recycled. The 3, 4, 6, and 7 types are likely not getting recycled. We do our best to recycle what we can and that is why we invest in technology (while also economically making sense).*

Two questions: 1) can you please tell us whether we should be saving our plastic bags and take them to Safeway to drop off (is it worth the effort) and 2) can you share your thoughts on artificial turf that is not recyclable and just accumulating- *1) I cannot really respond to that, but recently I saw on one of the CNN channels that there was a tracker in one of the bags to see the end of life process. If you really want to be environmentally friendly then don't use those bags at all. Reusable bags are the best. The only guarantee we can have is to not use single waste and reduce 2) people still use them, but there is not a lot that comes to recycling so there is not enough personally knowledge to know what kind of plastic they are using. It is a newer issue and I have not encountered it so I cannot speak much to that.*

Can you comment on the prices of commodities and the price fluctuation- *I am never happy with the prices. If you look at the recycling commodifying, it is going through many up and downs. This is driven by supply and demand. In the recycling business, there is a lot of external factors that influence the pricing. E.g. travel routes having to be extended due to risk of piracy and this can impact the price and normally this would be supply and demand, but when things happen like this it will change the whole dynamic. When China is not taking the recycling coming in, there was a huge impact on the price of paper. These fluctuations happen every day and no one is going to know what is going to happen tomorrow.*

2% contamination, how is that determined: *when the materials are shipped, custom is not going to check thoroughly every container (roughly it is eyeballed), if all that is what happens then that is subject to rejection. If they open the one container, then they don't have to open the rest of the container with the shipment, they do have to be careful.*

Is there any current recycling for clothing? *Locally we don't take textiles, but in SF they do since it is required in their contract. If people put textiles into recycling bins, they go into the truck and get compact, but then it comes in contact with contamination with other materials. While they are trying to take it out and do recycling, but by the time it is taken out to be recycled it has contamination and can attract rodents and pest from soaking in food. The good will does bail up the textiles they can sell that are not contaminated and*

are clean and sent to the industrial recycling market.

The recycling for paper in Santa Rosa gets mixed with other materials, is that too dirty to recycle if you would imagine, if we ship paper overseas, then the first gate is going to know that 98% would be great but that may not be the same rules and regulations that effect customs who have to eyeball it. The paper mills have the systems to purify small stains. But for paper that has some contamination and food products it is generally not a problem. The pure bales that have just paper or cardboard can be sold at a higher price than the mixed bails. Addressing the bails is helping a lot with that.

4. Presentation re amend NDFE for SCRR Windsor Recycling Transload Facility - Stu Clark

Presentation: AB939- part of this is the development of a county wide integrated waste management. That plan has certain elements, it has a non-disposal facility element. It also happens that every facility in Sonoma county is required to be listed as a non-disposal facility permit. It is technically supposed to be listed as part of the non-disposal facility. If you apply for a solid waste facility permit to be a no disposal facility, the application form will need to be checked to see that yes it's a non-disposal facility. The rules of getting listed are a little archaic and have been changed over time. It is a wise choice that this listing that their new proposed recycling transload facility be listed in the element so they can now apply for a solid waste permit. The facility serves the town of Windsor with solid waste, yard wastes, and recyclables. They have a rather clean fiber stream, but they don't have a processing facility like Recology. They have been going pretty long distance to deliver recyclables to this process. One technical step is to get the facility listed and to deposit the recyclables on the floor and load them to larger transport vehicles with take them to a processed facility. There is a reduction in vehicle miles travelled, greenhouse gas, and overall a win. Since we rarely update the non facility disposal requirement, as part of the process we are bringing this to the LTF for transparency and it will be up to zero waste to add or approve the project. It almost just information, but the reason they are applying for it is because there is no facility in Sonoma county to take these materials to and it is costly and there are issues with greenhouse gases.

Questions:

NA/ no questions.

5. Presentation on Food Waste in Power Outages – Michael Siminitus

Presentation:

This was an issue that came up in February 2024 during a mass power outage. I was at Safeway and observed that much of the perishable food there got tossed (not diverted or donated). There should have been a requirement for foods to be diverted or donated. An idea that cropped up was making an announcement (radio, PSA, etc.) and communicate to the public that this food is available for a period of time before the health code requires the food to be disposed. There are many challenges with this for the grocery. They can also fill the carts and have that be out. With PG&E, frequent disasters, reliability of grid that it is timely for distributing perishable food waste, SOP's during mass power outages, and potential reporting requirements. There could be a great deal of support to the community during these types of economic crises and may potentially reduce labor and disposal costs. Here to ask for collaboration between various community groups and make some progress to develop and emergency food distribution network.

Collaboration across attendees:

Agreement that the best use is to get this to people, but there is a new food waste depackager resource that can help divert that resource to the landfill. With the depackager is that it will go through and remove the vast majority of the plastic packaging and you end up with that resource. We are looking forward to this infrastructure. For a store like Safeway, wouldn't a store that large have a backup generator?

Michael Siminitus: There are some backup generators to keep on lights and registers but they don't have the capacity to also fuel the refrigeration. There are a variety of different options, but not sure how well the depackager can handle the influx of food during disaster where many stores may have food waste. This can be an easy solution to have requirements and announcements to be made, this is perishables are written off.

Zero waste:

In the reference for the food that was disposed of in this example was not food safe (it has 4 hours) and could not be donated, however what Safeway should have done was unpackage the food and compost so they were out of compliance. There is a Northcoast foodwaste emergency partnership grant that is a regional grant program. There are a lot of players in this space who are organized around disaster preparedness. They are workshopping pipelines to establish emergency systems when this kind of situation occurs. We invite Michael to attend these meetings and to get involved. We want to create those specialized pipelines that are

triggered in these emergencies. The other part of this is to work with other organizations to make sure they have off grid power so in case of emergencies they are not relying on the grid. That is the other piece of this, that is sort a fundable mechanism under 1383 is to provide those mechanisms for this. It could be on the corporation to store their off grid power sources, but on the food recovery piece of this is something we can work with them on.

Question:

Was this primarily packaged food: *it was both perishable and packaged food (e.g. salad kit). This is an ongoing issue and not just to Safeway.*

In your opinion, is there any role for the LTF right now? It sounds like there is another organization that is up and working, but is there a role we should take or no because there is an existing team with specialized knowledge who is currently working on this? *[zero waste] there may be some leverage for us to collaborate with each jurisdiction and region that they are going to work on. This is something that people can keep an eye on. [Michael] all of this is good and there are many people working with diverse backgrounds, but with all of this happening at once that could potentially exceed the capacity of food donation organization. In order to make this less complicated, less points of failure, less reliance on other entities- it may be worth it to create a resolution or requiring a simple announcement that food is available to the public. There may not be a need to complicate this with all the middle men. [Stu] the mission for the LTF is designed to be an advisory board to zero waste Sonoma and the advisory board. There was a lot of great ideas shared here and our role would be informed by what solutions can make sense and advocate for it. We don't have the authority to enact resolutions, but we can lend our voice and advocate. There are recommendations in our capacity as an advisory board. [Liz] The best way we can be involved is to circle back to this and have us get more information to potentially get a resolution. Thank you for bringing this to our attention.*

6. Update on Landfill Expansion – Glenn Morelli

Presentation: we were given information by the board to expand, and we needed to know what expansion we were going to perform. Under sequa, to make sure that the site is appropriate for the needs. There have been a lot of changes, but we are taking a fresh look. We are still on track for an expansion, but a study will be conducted for us to look at our options. Once the study is concluded we will sit down and look at our options. There was a slight delay due to this.

7. Update on Compost Council/State Updates - Dan Noble

Presentation: We have readopted the mission that we support the expansion of compost facilities in Sonoma County. Compost fits in how we manage our organic waste in terms of soil and energy. A SWOT analysis was conducted, and so anyone who wants to know the details can get access to these files. The goals and objectives do an assessment of the county and surrounding counties. We are just now at the stage of putting together potential projects. Now the potential projects are basically biomass, which is part of the waste system (we will do a deeper dive on this), then look at how we will build processing capacity and the potential projects we will look at developing. We will come back when we have more specific information. Not all the wood waste, there is lots of tonnage that needs to be managed.

8. Update on Zero Waste Week, Compost Hubs – Xinci Tan, Leslie Lukacs

October 12-19 2024. Expanding to Napa and Marin county this year. There will be online, in person workshops, fix and reuse fairs, produce swaps, and more.

9. Public Comments*

NA

10. Member Announcements and Comments

NA

11. Next Regular Meeting Date/Suggestions for Agenda Items -

August 8, 2024

12. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn

Seconded

Motion passed

*PUBLIC COMMENTS: Members of the public desiring to speak on items that are within the jurisdiction of the Local Task Force shall have an opportunity during each regular meeting of the Local Task Force. When recognized by the Chair, each person should give his/her name and address and limit comments to 3 minutes, with the discretion of the Chair to modify that time limit.