



# Memorandum

## MONTEREY REGIONAL WASTE MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

Reviewed by Wmm Date 4.13.07  
General Manager

DATE: April 12, 2007  
TO: General Manager  
FROM: Public Education and Recycling Manager  
SUBJECT: Report on Litter and Public Education Activities

### BACKGROUND

An update follows on recent grant applications, our latest public workshop, and upcoming events.

#### **Litter Report**

At a time when there were many vacant Adopt-A-Highway (AAH) stretches along Highway 1, the District adopted a total of three AAH segments. Most recently, staff worked with CalTrans to coordinate the transfer of one MRWMD adopted segment to Sand City. Our congratulations to Sand City for stepping up, and adopting this northbound stretch of Highway 1 through their city. CalTrans has recently updated the AAH signage with an improved appearance and the new Sand City and MRWMD signs are now installed.

#### **Recycling Report**

The State Department of Conservation will award \$1.5 million in competitive grants late this summer for projects that increase beverage container recycling. Staff worked with Ecology Action to develop and submit a Phase 1 proposal to implement the "Monterey Bay Area Regional Tourism Recycling & Litter Abatement Project". The intent of the proposal is to create convenient and consistent recycling programs at bars and restaurants, entertainment and hospitality venues, conference centers, parks and community events. The geographic scope of the proposal includes the MRWMD service area with the exception of Monterey who elected to submit an independent proposal. The goal is for the program implementation, outreach and promotion to be the same throughout the MRWMD service area. Ecology Action included the County of Santa Cruz, Monterey County and the cities of Santa Cruz, Scotts Valley, Capitola and Watsonville in the regional grant so that hospitality recycling efforts will have uniformity throughout the region. The grant requests a total of \$559,500.

In addition, the MRWMD submitted a Phase 1 grant proposal to help fund the implementation of a recycling buyback center on site. The District is presently evaluating the cost to locate and staff a buyback center. Grant funds, if awarded, would enhance the financial proforma now under development.

Staff conducted a home compost education workshop on Saturday March 25<sup>th</sup> which was fully subscribed with 50 people in attendance. The workshop provided an overview of the art and science of home composting with attendees eligible to purchase a low cost compost bin at the Last Chance Mercantile (LCM) following the event. The LCM reported 34 compost bins sold following the workshop. Staff plans to run several more discount compost bin promotions this spring with the objective to encourage more waste diversion through home composting and to turn the inventory of bins at the LCM.

The District was contacted by a reporter at the *Monterey County Weekly* researching a story on used household battery recycling. We reported that used battery collection at the Household Hazardous Waste collection facility totaled 5,629 lbs from July 2005 - June 2006, an average of 469 lbs per month. The California law prohibiting household battery disposal in trash took effect in February 2006. This fiscal year, we have received 8,123 lbs, an average of 902.5 lbs per month and the District program is on pace to nearly double our FY 05/06 collection tonnage in FY 06/07.

  
Jeff Lindenthal

# The time to recycle is NOW

BY GEORGE WORTHY 3/21/07

*South County Newspapers Online*

Reduce-Reuse-Recycle. These are the catchwords of the Salinas Valley Solid Waste Authority (SVSWA). This organization is in charge of dealing with the trash you place out on the curb once a week. Putting it somewhere where it can't be seen or smelled. They seem to be doing a pretty good job as I haven't had anyone return to me any of the trash I decide that I no longer need. It is mostly packaging material anyway. Isn't it amazing how much you have to go through to play that CD you just bought? I actually have to wait until I get home to open some packages because you need a razor blade or a wrench to get the darn things into your hands.

The idea of Reduce-Reuse-Recycle, is to remind you that those many items that you want to get rid of have to go somewhere and they hope that you might find it easier and less expensive to find a way to let these articles be reborn as something useful again. They are making warm and toasty blankets out of the plastic water bottles that most of us just throw away. The glass that you probably paid a California Return Value on when you threw it in your shopping basket is being fought over to reuse as glass in another fashion. Recycling has become a major industry.

Computer items that were, at one time, the bane of the trash business are now being fought over by recyclers that tear them down for the precious metals contained therein. There is practically nothing in the food chain that can't be reused today. The problem is to force ourselves into making the little extra effort to get it to the right place.

In Gonzales, we are allowed one container for the trash and another for recycle items. I'll admit it is hard sometimes to take the extra steps to the recycle container when you get nothing but a bunch of catalogs in your daily mail. I'm sure the post office would not need another price hike for the next few years if they could figure out a way to make money off the stuff pulled out of their mailboxes and then tossed into the cans in the lobby where the Post Office boxes are placed.

The SVSWA has determined that within the next 15 years they are going to reduce the amount of refuse that goes into our landfills by 75 percent. In The Salinas Valley we will soon be down to one waste site. That, unfortunately, happens to be Johnson Canyon Road. That is why, as president of the Solid Waste Authority, I have, along with all the members of the board, decided that we must cut down on the waste that is transferred to this site.

We cannot continue to just pile our garbage out on the ground and cover it up each day. Soon enough we will run out of room. OK, maybe we won't run out of room. There is an awful lot of land out there between our valley and the valley to the east. The only problem with using land that is not lived on is that the folks that own that land don't want the waste site near them any more than we want it up on Johnson Canyon Road. The other problem is that as we site our landfills further away from where the garbage is created, we must pay to have it hauled. This is where the real expense will come to us through higher and higher bills from our collectors. Have you noticed the price of gas or diesel lately? At \$3.50 per gallon you can imagine that the companies that provide that service for us will want to get their money back. Recently we had to raise the price per ton to dump refuse at the Johnson Canyon and Crazy Horse Canyon sites. The SVSWA added three dollars and fifty cents to each ton delivered. This is reflected by an additional fifty cents per barrel for our garbage. You can see if we have to keep raising the price to bring garbage to our sites that either more morons will dump the trash by the side of the road or we will be paying a lot more money to get rid of what we no longer need.

We all need to start doing our part. I mean we must start putting those bottles in another container and making sure all the recyclables are separated and put out for pickup. One of the organizations that is starting this year to embrace the recycle idea is our own Little League Organization. They have requested and are picking out some new containers for the Little League park. There will be no more papers flying around from where someone has been checking the cans for recyclables that can be turned in for cash and the Little League will actually profit from their efforts as they turn in the plastic and aluminum for cash.

In the Worthy clan we have started putting our plastic bottles in one of those old recycle containers and when it is full we take it down behind Super Max and turn them in for cash. The money will add up and we will use it for our vacation this summer. It will be a good way to show the boys and help my wallet at the same time.

It is not easy to make new habits. It has been said that anything you do for two weeks will become a natural act. Wouldn't it be cool if we could all really put our efforts into the Reduce, Reuse, Recycle mantra that has been started by the SVSWA. I mean, it may not be as cool as "Don't Mess With Texas," or some of the other mottos that green states like Oregon or Washington use, but it will work if we all pull together.

Congratulations to our Little League for taking this step. Maybe all the organizations in our town and yours and each one of us can put some effort into putting our waste into something other than the can that is dumped up in Johnson Canyon.

God Bless.

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San Francisco Chronicle

**S.F. FIRST CITY TO BAN PLASTIC SHOPPING BAGS****Supermarkets and chain pharmacies will have to use recyclable or compostable sacks**

Charlie Goodyear, Chronicle Staff Writer

Wednesday, March 28, 2007

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Paper or plastic? Not anymore in San Francisco.

The city's Board of Supervisors approved groundbreaking legislation Tuesday to outlaw plastic checkout bags at large supermarkets in about six months and large chain pharmacies in about a year.

The ordinance, sponsored by Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi, is the first such law in any city in the United States and has been drawing global scrutiny this week.

"I am astounded and surprised by the worldwide attention," Mirkarimi said. "Hopefully, other cities and other states will follow suit."

Fifty years ago, plastic bags -- starting first with the sandwich bag -- were seen in the United States as a more sanitary and environmentally friendly alternative to the deforesting paper bag. Now an estimated 180 million plastic bags are distributed to shoppers each year in San Francisco. Made of filmy plastic, they are hard to recycle and easily blow into trees and waterways, where they are blamed for killing marine life. They also occupy much-needed landfill space.

Two years ago, San Francisco officials considered imposing a 17-cent tax on petroleum-based plastic bags before reaching a deal with the California Grocers Association. The agreement called for large supermarkets to reduce by 10 million the number of bags given to shoppers in 2006. The grocers association said it cut back by 7.6 million, but city officials called that figure unreliable and unverifiable because of poor data supplied by markets.

The dispute led to a renewed interest in outlawing the standard plastic bag, which Mirkarimi said Tuesday was a "relic of the past." Under the legislation, which passed 10-1 in the first of two votes, large markets and pharmacies will have the option of using compostable bags made of corn starch or bags made of recyclable paper. San Francisco will join a number of countries, such as Ireland, that already have outlawed plastic bags or have levied a tax on

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them. Final passage of the legislation is expected at the board's next scheduled meeting, and the mayor is expected to sign it.

The grocers association has warned that the new law will lead to higher prices for San Francisco shoppers.

"We're disappointed that the Board of Supervisors is going down this path," said Kristin Power, the association's vice president for government relations. "It will frustrate recycling efforts and will increase both consumer and retailer costs. There's also a real concern about the availability and quality of compostable bags."

Power said most of the group's members operating in San Francisco are likely to switch to paper bags "simply because of the affordability and availability issues."

Mirkarimi's legislation is one in a string of environmentally sensitive measures -- such as outlawing Styrofoam food containers and encouraging clean-fuel construction vehicles at city job sites -- adopted by the city in recent months.

"It's really exciting," Jared Blumenfeld, director of the city's Department of the Environment, said after the vote on Tuesday. "We're thrilled. It's been a long time in the making."

Blumenfeld said it takes 430,000 gallons of oil to manufacture 100 million bags. Compostable bags can be recycled in the city's green garbage bins and will make it more convenient for residents to recycle food scraps, he said.

Recycling of paper bags also is far more active today than it was when the plastic bag was first introduced to U.S. consumers.

The lone dissenting voice in the board chamber on Tuesday was Supervisor Ed Jew, who noted that 95,000 small businesses in San Francisco will continue to use plastic bags. Jew, who in his third month in office has taken to critiquing his colleagues for being too quick to burden residents and businesses with new mandates, complained that Mirkarimi's legislation has taken too much of the board's time.

"We need to move on to address the larger issues in San Francisco," Jew said shortly before he voted against the ordinance.

Supervisor Michela Alioto-Pier, who introduced amendments this month that will subject pharmacy chains to the legislation, said many large businesses in San Francisco already participate in recycling programs.

"The target of this legislation is the bags themselves and improving the environment," she said.

Plastic bags by the numbers

180 million

Treatment

**DENTAL**  
FINANCE MGR. GR  
OPPORTUNITY

**DRIVERS**  
SCHOOL BUS MUS  
have Class B w/P

**DRIVERS**  
1000 HIRING BON  
Deliver small

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Roughly the number of plastic shopping bags distributed in San Francisco each year.

2 to 3 cents

Amount each bag costs markets, compared with anywhere from 5 to 10 cents for a biodegradable bag.

4 trillion to 5 trillion

Number of nondegradable plastic bags used worldwide annually.

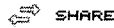
430,000 gallons

Amount of oil needed to produce 100 million nondegradable plastic bags.

Source: S.F. Department of the Environment; Worldwatch Institute

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**Robyn Hunter** of San Francisco loads plastic bags full of groceries into the trunk of her car after shopping at the Marina Safeway.

# How many plastic bags do you have?



**Paul Holtz, the Castro**

I only have 15 or so, because I just returned about 200 to Safeway for recycling. I use them to clean up after my dog in the backyard, and post some in the local dog park.



**Jennifer Byrd,  
Mission District**

On any given day I have about 25. I use them for one thing only — to collect and throw away cat litter after I clean my cat's box. They are the best.



**Ed Rose, the Haight**

I have two or three dozen, but they go quickly. I use them for the garbage pail and cat litter disposal. My housekeeper uses them when she takes out the trash. I'd hate to think I'll have to start buying plastic bags. How will that help the problem?



**Jerry Steach, the Presidio**

I've lost count, but I'd estimate in the hundreds, all awaiting the next trip to one of the precious few locations that accept them for recycling. I look forward to the day we've been weaned off plastic bags entirely.



**Maggie Vaughn,  
Cathedral Hill**

I have two large ones folded up in my purse and use them when shopping on foot. I use paper bags from my trunk when shopping by car. I try not to accept new plastic bags when shopping without my bags — I just carry goods by hand.



**Wolfgang Schubert,  
Outer Richmond**

We have a steady stock of about 30 and use them to dump whatever is not recyclable from our household waste. Just the other day at Fort Point, I saw a seagull entangled in an empty plastic bag, which dragged it down into the water. It was sad to see how the bird almost drowned. Now the bag is swimming in the bay as a hazard to other creatures of the sea.



**Toby Dixon, Lower Haight**

I try to never take plastic bags from stores. They force them on you, and I normally have to repeat two or three times that I don't want them. Then I make a big speech about how many plastic bags are made each year. Most people roll their eyes or simply don't care.

San Francisco Chronicle  
Wednesday, March 28, 2007

## PLASTIC NEWSPAPER WRAPPERS MAY BE NEXT TARGET OF S.F. LAW

By Chuck Squatriglia  
CHRONICLE STAFF WRITER

The plastic bag your Chronicle may have arrived in this morning is not biodegradable, but it will be if San Francisco Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi has his way.

Mirkarimi drafted the landmark legislation the Board of Supervisors approved Tuesday requiring the city's largest grocers and drugstores to offer only biodegradable or recyclable plastic or paper bags. He said he is inclined to expand the law to include newspapers and other sources of petroleum-based bags.

"We will definitely be looking at it," he said. "More will be coming from us."

Chronicle newspaper bags are not biodegradable, but they are recyclable — although few Bay Area recycling firms accept them because they are difficult to recycle.

"Currently, we strive to offer readers optimum balance of recyclable materials and delivery of a clean and dry newspaper," said Henry Ford, director of

marketing for The Chronicle. "We will comply with any new legislation that is introduced and subsequently approved."

Ford declined to say how many bags The Chronicle uses annually.

The Chronicle is one of several newspapers in the Bay Area that may be delivered in plastic bags. Others include the San Jose Mercury News, the Examiner and the New York Times. Dozens of companies sell the newspaper bags.

Mirkarimi said that in the coming months, he will study how many plastic bags are generated by newspapers, restaurants and other sources to determine their impact on the environment. He could not say when legislation on those bags might be introduced.

"We should close the loop on this issue," he said. "It's a quality-of-life issue."

The Chronicle uses bags made of linear low-density polyethylene (4), the material used to make trash bags. It offers protection from the elements and can hold up after being thrown onto a sidewalk or doorstep, ac-

ording to the paper's Web site.

The bags can be recycled, but it is almost infeasible to do so, said Robert Reed, a spokesman for Sunset Scavenger Co. The firm handles much of the recycling in San Francisco. Plastic bags are hard to handle, they are not easily separated from other materials and they harm conveyor belts and other equipment, he said.

"They're the biggest challenge in the waste stream," he said. "The solution is to eliminate them from the waste stream."

Critics of the bags said biodegradable bags should be used, and then only when inclement weather requires using them to keep papers dry.

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### Online resources

For more information:

- ◆ [sfgate.com/ZQ](http://sfgate.com/ZQ)
- ◆ [links.sfgate.com/ZR](http://links.sfgate.com/ZR)
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E-mail Chuck Squatriglia at [csquatriglia@sfchronicle.com](mailto:csquatriglia@sfchronicle.com)

They take littering seriously!

San Francisco Chronicle  
Wednesday, March 28, 2007

## Police charged with beating tourist accused of littering

ASSOCIATED PRESS

RIVERHEAD, N.Y. — The acting police chief and three part-time officers from a popular Long Island vacation spot were indicted Tuesday on charges they beat a tourist after he was accused of littering.

Samuel Gilbert, 34, suffered severe internal injuries, including a ruptured bladder, that required 10 days in a hospital.

Authorities promised that the indictments were the first phase of an investigation into police conduct in Ocean Beach, a village known for enforcing laws such as a onetime ban on eating cookies on public walkways.

“It was a police department

gone wild. There was no control at all,” Suffolk County District Attorney Thomas Spota said. The officers “acted as thugs in police uniforms.”

Acting Police Chief George Hesse, 38, is charged with assault and unlawful imprisonment in the August 2005 confrontation with Gilbert, who still visits a urologist and is receiving psychiatric care.

A bouncer at a bar across the street from the Police Department accused Gilbert of littering and took him over to be cited. The officers dragged him into a room and kicked him in the stomach, said D. Carl Lustig III, the lawyer representing Gilbert in a lawsuit against the village and the department.

Hesse’s lawyer, William Keahon, contended Gilbert was intoxicated and suggested he hurt himself in a fall.

Lustig did not dispute that his client had been drinking.

The part-time officers were charged with unlawful imprisonment, reckless endangerment and hindering prosecution. They were identified as Paul Carollo, 46, Arnold Hardman, 51, and William Emburey, 42.

All four men pleaded not guilty Tuesday. They remain free on bail.

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## Professor Toro

proftoro@montereyherald.com



**Trash cinema:** The landfill in Marina is no stranger to Hollywood lights. It was, after all, the setting for Jonathan Livingston Seagull.

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But Monday, film crews will appear at the Monterey Regional Waste Management District landfill's gas power plant to shoot part of an international documentary about power generation plants around the world.

The Marina site is expected to be included in the "Save Our Selves" environmental concert and film series that will be hosted by former Vice President Al Gore, the global warming guru.

Landfill officials say the site was chosen because of its 4.6-megawatt landfill gas-to-energy power plant that uses methane harvested from the landfill as fuel.

These days, that sort of renewable energy source is known as star power.

### MARINA

#### **Waste district manager to be part of conference on energy**

William Merry, general manager of the Monterey Regional Waste Management District, will be a member of a team planning an international conference in September on how to develop landfill gas-to-energy projects.

The conference will be held in California on a date and place to be announced, and involves 100 mayors, directors of landfills and industry experts.