



Memorandum

MONTEREY REGIONAL WASTE MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

Reviewed by Wmm Date 9-14-07
General Manager

DATE: September 14, 2007
TO: General Manager
FROM: Public Education and Recycling Manager
SUBJECT: Report on Public Education and Litter Activities

BACKGROUND

The following is an update on recent staff activity.

Litter Report

As previously reported, the District, in partnership with the Salinas Valley Solid Waste Authority, co-sponsored a Basta Basura summer skit at the Monterey Bay Aquarium that creatively portrayed the problems associated with litter in the marine environment. The litter website www.KeepMontereyCountyClean.org website was prominently featured verbally in the skit and graphically in the Aquarium program. Usage statistics for the website show that monthly visits to the site increased from 361 in May to more than 550 during the months of July and August. The show ran from just after Memorial Day through Labor Day weekend. One of the characters from the skit wrote the attached "A look behind the garbage costume" column for the Monterey County Weekly on August 30th. The Aquarium has reported that the show was popular with their visitors and they would like to bring it back next year. The District's share of the co-sponsorship was \$2,500. Based on usage statistics for the litter website, it appears that this sponsorship succeeded in bringing new visitors to the litter website while raising awareness of the marine litter problem. In addition, the Aquarium audience research specialist is now finishing up a final report and evaluation of the Basta Basura program. From the preliminary report the Aquarium shared with us, there was a "strong majority of people who both reported that they had learned something new about ocean conservation and that they were considering changing their behavior" as a result after seeing this show.

Usage Statistics for www.KeepMontereyCountyClean.org Website Through September 13, 2007						
Summary by Month	Daily Average			Monthly Totals		
	Visits	Pages	Hits	Visits	Pages	Hits
Sep-07	10	18	73	141	236	1013
Aug-07	13	20	88	425	638	2751
Jul-07	18	30	104	584	949	3227
Jun-07	18	27	103	565	822	3098
May-07	11	16	60	361	515	1866
Apr-07	11	16	60	335	488	1810
Mar-07	10	13	48	319	406	1496
Feb-07	11	16	47	322	448	1331
Jan-07	9	13	45	309	415	1400
Dec-06	8	12	37	273	373	1147
Nov-06	5	7	21	157	215	646
Oct-06	3	4	14	93	133	438
Totals				3857	5601	20023

Visits = Distinct users that visit the web site; Pages = Number of different website pages viewed; Hits = Total of number of "clicks" (links, pages, etc.) visitors make when visiting site

Recycling in the News

The attached article from the *L.A. Times* describes efforts underway in Los Angeles to achieve 70% diversion by the year 2015. The City recently added plastic bags and plastic foam (polystyrene) to their curbside recycling program. The article also indicates that contamination in recycling bins totals 25%, a very large number. As a result the City is deploying eight "recycling ambassadors" to help educate the public on how to use their recycling bins. The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors are now considering a ban on plastic bags.

Locally, on the subject of banning plastic bags, Director Downey asked staff to comment on a letter she received from the California Grocers Association (CGA). The CGA does not favor a ban on plastic bags at retail stores and instead favors curbside recycling of plastic bags and the in-store plastic bag recycling as required under the new AB 2449. A copy of General Manager Merry's reply to Director Downey is attached.

The City of Monterey is presently the only MRWMD jurisdiction that offers curbside recycling for plastic bags. By comparison, all of Santa Cruz County jurisdictions include plastic bag recycling in their curbside programs and these materials are processed at the Waste Management Inc. Material Recovery Facility in Castroville. Local jurisdictions might want to consider asking their franchise hauler to add plastic bags and film to their curbside recycling programs.

Central Coast Recycling Media Coalition (CCRMC) Update

The first new recycling advertisement has been produced with CCRMC consultant Sandi Manor of AdManor (formerly Carl and Manor). The spot visually features a "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Please don't Litter" message. Both English and Spanish versions of the ad are available and will begin airing this November. Rather than try and "brand" the "CCRMC" (which is made up of jurisdictions and haulers from the Tri-County Region), the advertising campaign will use the tagline "Protect your Central Coast – the difference you make is real". This will be supported by a new www.ProtectYourCentralCoast.org website which will feature links to all our jurisdictions and local programs. The website will also give us a good tool to use to help measure the success of the program by monitoring traffic to and through the site during the ad campaign. Additional new advertisements on this theme will be produced and begin airing in the spring.


Green Building Committee of the Monterey Business Council

General Manager William Merry is co-chairing the Green Building Committee, a Competitive Cluster of the Monterey County Business Council. The committee meets monthly and has developed a work plan with three primary work groups: Economic Development; Policy, Incentives, Regulations; and Outreach.

On a related note, local firm Daniels and House Construction is implementing a model reuse and recycling project while building the new Trader Joe's store on the site of the former Safeway in Monterey. The company deconstructed the Safeway building and is constructing the Trader Joe's largely from building materials salvaged from the Safeway. Daniels and House is producing a video documentary of the project which will also showcase reuse and construction and demolition recycling activity here at the District. The District was asked to contribute \$3,000 toward the production cost of the documentary which we agreed to provide out of our existing advertising budget. Plans call for the finished documentary to be aired locally and at industry conferences and gatherings. As such, it will be a valuable asset in helping describe how the District operates as well as an example of the good cooperation between the private and public sector within the District. The City of Monterey is taking a leadership role in helping coordinate and fund this innovative project.

Grant Funding Requested for Bike Lockers on Site

The District received notice that the Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District had supplemental grant funding available for projects that help reduce motor vehicle emissions. We presently have three employees that commute to work by bicycle several times a week and one employee that formerly participated in the AMBAG electric bike loan program. As the District does not have dedicated storage on site for bicycles, a grant request was submitted on September 5th totaling \$4,934 for the purchase of four bike lockers, each of which can store two bicycles. Our grant request has been recommended for approval at the Board's September 19th meeting and it is hoped that the availability of on site lockers will provide additional incentive for MRWMD employees to ride to work on occasion.


Jeff Lindenthal

Attachment



Trashy Scene

A look behind the garbage costume at the Aquarium's "Basta Basura" drama.

Aug 30, 2007

By Peter Tvrznik

advertisement

Little Rosa Maria skips down the beach, thinking about how much she loves the sea. The wind pulls at her hair. The salty tide chases after her. Finishing a drink, she realizes that there are no garbage cans around. She turns to look at the ocean.

Suddenly, the air is pierced by a voice serenading her with a *Grease-influenced* "Ode to Plastic," imploring her to throw her bottle into the sea. Looking to see who it is, the little girl spots a trash monster emerging from the water. Before the monster can convince her, however, a sea otter shows up and offers a friendly reprimand—causing the trash monster to lose his temper.

I am this angry trash monster. Three times a day, I suit up as part of "Basta Basura" (Spanish for "Enough Trash") at the Monterey Bay Aquarium. Written and directed by El Teatro Campesino's Kinan Valdez, this 15-minute show utilizes several different characters and songs to teach children the harmful effects of throwing garbage into the ocean. Its popularity has earned it another run next summer, but its current season expires after this weekend.

During each performance, children watch eagerly as I, Beto Basura, and the sea otter struggle for the girl's allegiance. What they don't see is my microphone pack falling off my belt and beginning to choke me. What they don't smell is my costume—and its colorful mixture of three different male body odors. If they did, my audience—usually several families petrified by the sight of me—might be more scared.

Rosa Maria, however, shows them how to bury that fear: She declares her plan to help clean up the oceans and the seas. This trash monster writhes in pain at her words, and is unable to stop her from pushing it offstage. The girl has had enough.

Basta Basura continues through Sept. 3 at 11am, 12:30pm and 2pm at the Monterey Bay Aquarium, 880 Cannery Row, Monterey. The show is free with admission to the aquarium.

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<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-recycle28aug28,1,6492713.story?ctrack=3&cset=true>
From the Los Angeles Times

L.A. accepting more items in recycling program

By Francisco Vara-Orta
Los Angeles Times Staff Writer

August 28, 2007

To help the city meet its recycling goals, Los Angeles' Bureau of Sanitation has expanded the variety of items it will accept to include foam and more plastic products.

Since July 1, residents have been allowed to place in city-issued recycling bins plastic grocery bags as well as products made from polystyrene foam, known under the trademark Styrofoam. The city has launched a promotional campaign to educate the public on its expanded recycling program.

Some of the new recyclables include plastic hangers and grocery bags, and polystyrene foam cups and containers.

The expansion is part of a larger effort to meet Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa's goal of recycling, by 2015, 70% of the estimated 10 million tons of waste generated annually by the city, said Alex Helou, division manager for the Bureau of Sanitation.

Toward this end, the city's Public Works Department launched a pilot program in February in the east San Fernando Valley to help educate the public on proper sorting. Eight full-time "recycling ambassadors" have been dispatched to neighborhoods to instruct homeowners on the correct use of city-issued recycling bins.

Each homeowner has three specially colored bins: blue for general recycling, green for landscape recycling and black for refuse.

"We get feedback from residents all the time that say they don't know what to toss in what bin and what can or cannot go in the blue bin," Helou said.

The east San Fernando Valley has some of the dirtiest recycling bins in the city, and that is why it was picked for the pilot project, Helou said. The most commonly misplaced items in the blue recycling bins are fabrics and dirt.

City officials hope the program will help redirect 400 tons of potential recyclables to the proper bins, which could generate an additional \$4.3 million annually for the city, Helou said. The city has to throw out more than 25% of blue-bin contents because some residents don't bother to properly clean the recyclables.

"You don't have to wash the bottles and products, but just make sure they aren't dirty or soiled," Helou said. "Everything has to be clean to process at recycling or it'll be tossed."

The blue-bin program cost \$52 million to operate last fiscal year, breaking down to a cost of \$6 per

household, compared with \$15 a household for non-recyclable refuse, the city reported.

But the future of the city's efforts to recycle plastic bags and polystyrene foam is uncertain. The Board of Supervisors is considering a ban on plastic grocery bags, while environmental groups have called for a statewide ban on both types of products.

"The city of Los Angeles has been making great strides in providing recycling services to households, but it's more costly to recycle the foam and the bags," said Mark Murray, executive director of Californians Against Waste, a nonprofit group based in Sacramento.

"An outright ban would be better. In the blue bins, bags get crushed and compacted with everything else and get contaminated by touching the other products, which people then have to separate."

Murray stressed that the cost of recycling polystyrene foam is the most expensive in the state, citing a 2006 California Department of Conservation report that said processing the foam costs \$3,320 per ton, compared with \$89.72 per ton for glass.

"Although the new services are well-intentioned, Los Angeles needs to think further ahead on this economically and environmentally," Murray said.

Helou said his department doesn't support a ban on the polystyrene foam and plastic grocery bags because of potential revenue opportunities. He advises residents to place all plastic bags in one main bag, preventing the bags from clinging to other products and becoming soiled.

In the late 1980s, before state law required recycling, Los Angeles annually buried all 1.6 million tons of the waste it collected from curbsides. And though the amount of waste has stayed the same, only 1 million tons are now being sent to landfills, with the rest recycled, Helou said.

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MONTEREY REGIONAL WASTE MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

Home of the Last Chance Mercantile

August 24, 2007

WILLIAM MERRY, P.E., DEE
GENERAL MANAGER/
DISTRICT ENGINEER

TIMOTHY S. FLANAGAN
ASST. GENERAL MANAGER

RICHARD SHEDDEN, P.E.
SENIOR ENGINEER

RICHARD NORTON
ADMIN. SERVICES MGR.

ROBERT WELLINGTON
COUNSEL

Councilmember Libby Downey
City of Monterey
Monterey City Hall
Monterey, CA 93940

Re: Discussion of Plastic Bag Reduction and Recycling

Dear Councilmember Downey:

Thank you for sending a copy of the letter received at the City of Monterey from the California Grocers Association regarding their opposition to plastic bag prohibitions. The District applauds the City of Monterey for adding plastic bag recycling to your curbside recycling program. We are also pleased with the passage of AB 2449, which requires large grocers and pharmacies to offer plastic bag recycling, to label their plastic bags with a message to recycle them, and to promote a reduction in the use of plastic bags through customer education and the availability of reusable bags.

Statistics from the Progressive Bag Alliance show that California retailers distribute more than 19 billion plastic bags annually and less than 5 percent are currently recycled. Clearly, we need to work both on reducing plastic consumption and increasing recycling rates.

Plastic bags are also a big contributor to our local litter problems. The District has taken a leadership position over the last two years with its Litter Abatement Task Force. Plastic litter on land and waterways is a significant concern. The local Surfrider Foundation chapter picked up 62 plastic bags in front of the Monterey Beach Hotel during a beach clean-up on March 11th of this year. We have also had reports that there is a tremendous quantity of polystyrene (Styrofoam) collected during local beach cleanups. Monterey Bay Aquarium staff recently mentioned that during the Science Under Sail program they host, Styrofoam chowder sample cups are the number one plastic item they see littering our National Marine Sanctuary.

We believe that the consumption of plastic bags and disposable Styrofoam food packaging must be reduced. Certainly a ban on retail plastic bags is one way to accomplish this. Plastic grocery bags are just one of the plastic film types that are recyclable in the City of Monterey curbside program. Our Litter Abatement Task Force is very supportive of efforts to work with Monterey restaurateurs to encourage them to find alternatives to Styrofoam packaging.

Plastic Bag Reduction and Recycling

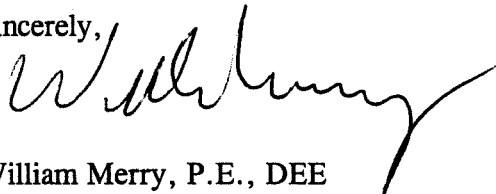
August 24, 2007

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One of the benefits of promoting the use of paper grocery bags and food service items is that these products do not pose the peril that plastic does when it enters the environment, especially the marine environment. Floating plastic bags are well known to be visually appetizing to a large number of marine species. When asked "paper or plastic" at the check out stand, the best answer remains "neither", reusable bags are best.

The District is very supportive of efforts in Monterey to reduce the consumption of plastics and boost recycling rates. Please let District Public Education and Recycling Manager Jeff Lindenthal or me know how we can assist you with your efforts by calling 384-5313.

Sincerely,



William Merry, P.E., DEE
General Manager

cc: MRWMD Board of Directors
City of Monterey Council Members
Fred Meurer, City Manager
Angela Brantley, Solid Waste Program Manager