



Memorandum

MONTEREY REGIONAL WASTE MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

Reviewed by Wmm Date 8/8/08
General Manager

DATE: August 8, 2008
TO: General Manager
FROM: Public Education and Recycling Manager
SUBJECT: Report on Public Education and Litter Activities

Litter Report

The next meeting of the Litter Abatement Task Force (LATF) will be held on Wednesday, August 13th at 2 p.m. The California Ocean Protection Council (OPC) has released a draft Ocean Litter Implementation Strategy with four broad objectives linked to specific actions to reduce ocean litter:

1. Prevent and control litter and plastic debris (changing individual behavior)
2. Reduce single-use plastic packaging and promote sustainable packaging (changing producer behavior)
3. Cleanup and remove litter (engaging communities)
4. Coordinate efforts with other Jurisdictions in the Pacific region (engaging other regions)

The full text of the Implementation Strategy contains thirteen action items including "reducing single-use plastic packaging" which is an action item the LATF addressed with the Environmentally Acceptable Food Packaging Model Ordinance. The Model Ordinance has since been adopted by the cities of Pacific Grove and Carmel-by-the-Sea. City of Monterey staff reports that they plan to take the Model Ordinance to their council in September. A copy of the OPC Strategy document has been provided to LATF members for their review prior to the August 13th meeting. The report can be accessed from the OPC website: http://www.resources.ca.gov/copc/documents_for_comment.html.

Debate on Plastic Bags and Packaging Continues

A letter to the editor of the Monterey Herald from August 8 is shown below. This letter references the OPC study and questions the plastics industry media campaign to oppose AB 2058 which would place a \$.25 per bag fee on paper *and* plastic grocery bags in an effort to reduce plastic consumption, litter, and ocean pollution. Also attached is a copy of the Resolution Adopting a Ban on the Use of Styrofoam and Plastic Packaging approved by the Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District on August 4, 2008. The Park District's Resolution states that it will include non-plastic and non-Styrofoam product requirements in its food vendor contract specifications.

Monterey County Herald, Letters to the Editor

August 8, 2008

Desperate plastic ad belongs in trash

The state's Ocean Protection Council released a sweeping study this week about how to get rid of trash in our oceans. One of the key recommendations was ridding our environment of plastic bags, which some enlightened state lawmakers are hard at work on via AB 2058. But the plastics industry is now running a desperate ad campaign that says AB 2058 is a "tax" that will cost consumers millions of dollars. Under the bill, shoppers would have to pay 25 cents for a plastic bag if they wanted one, with the money going to local anti-litter efforts.

It's pretty simple. Bring a reusable shopping bag, as hundreds of millions of Europeans already do, and you don't have to pay anything. If you want to talk about taxes, think about the \$25 million taxpayers in California pay each year to collect and dispose of the 19 billion unsightly and harmful plastic bags used each year in the state. I say send the money to our strapped schools and firehouses rather than subsidizing the plastics industry.

*Teresa Hardy
Pacific Grove*

Recycling Report

A meeting was convened on July 31 with staff from the City of Seaside, Waste Management Inc. (WMI) and the MRWMD to discuss the state of the community recycling bin at the Home Depot parking lot. Incidents of illegal dumping have been problematic at this location for many years. To combat this activity the City of Seaside has tried periodically staffing the site along with improving the fencing and signage as was reported to the MRWMD Board in May of 2005. Sadly, illegal dumping activity and general misuse of the site has continued to increase.

WMI reports that they now haul significantly more tonnage of refuse than recycling from the site. A particular problem that has been ongoing is the illegal disposal of appliances, water heaters and hazardous materials such as motor oil and paint that are routinely dumped. The removal of hazardous materials and cleanup of the site has proved costly for Seaside Public Works Department staff to deal with.

Since the tonnage of refuse now exceeds that of recycling, which adversely impacts the Seaside diversion rate, and given the ongoing headaches associated with illegal dumping at this location, it was agreed that WMI will send a letter to Seaside and the District quantifying the tonnage of trash vs. recycling collected. Seaside staff will then direct WMI to remove the recycling drop box from this location and the City will immediately remove the fencing and return the area to parking spaces. WMI staff reported that the community recycling bins in Pacific Grove and Moss Landing are utilized much more effectively and are not plagued with the ongoing problem of illegal dumping. City of Monterey staff report that the community recycling bin at the Fire Station is also well utilized and that illegal dumping is not a major problem.

California Resource Recovery Association Annual Conference

Kimberle Herring, Tim Flanagan and I attended the annual CRRA conference in Burlingame August 3 – 5th. One of the recurring themes in the conference was “Extended Producer Responsibility” (EPR). The goal of EPR is for whoever designs, produces, sells or uses a product to take responsibility for minimizing its environmental impact through all stages of the product’s life cycle. And the producer, having the greatest ability to minimize impacts, has the most responsibility. EPR is a tool local government can use to help curb the rising cost of “unfunded mandates” such as California’s universal waste rule prohibiting batteries and florescent bulbs from disposal. For example, the District’s cost to properly manage the household batteries and florescent light bulbs turned in at our HHW program increased 23% year-over-year from FY 06/07 to FY 07/08.

MRWMD Cost to Dispose of Household Batteries and Florescent Bulbs	
FY 06/07	FY 07/08
\$18,289	\$22,446

These costs reflect only the disposal/recycling cost the District pays to send batteries and bulbs to our vendor. They do not include staff time to sort batteries by type and package universal wastes for transport.

The California Product Stewardship Council (CPSC) is working to implement legislation which would shift more responsibility to product manufacturers. The Council has set a goal of reducing by 10-20% by 2011 the household hazardous waste disposal costs that local governments now pay. Product stewardship rewards producers and consumers for producing and purchasing products that are built to last and minimize toxic or harmful components. Utilizing funds in the public education budget for “memberships”, I propose that the District support the CPSC’s mission this fiscal year with an annual donation of \$500. With additional products to be banned by the State of California in the coming months, including “sharps” (or used needles) beginning September 1, 2008, Extended Producer Responsibility can reduce public costs by shifting California’s waste management system from one focused on government and ratepayer financed waste diversion to one that relies on producer responsibility to reduce public costs and promote environmental sustainability.

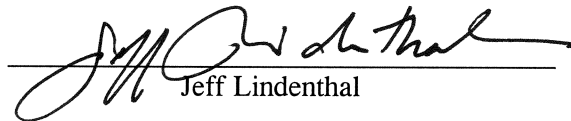
Public Education Program in the News

The attached article from the August 4th Living Section of the Monterey Herald provides a detailed overview of the successful Waste Free School pilot project implemented at Marshall Elementary School by District Public Education Coordinator Kimberle Herring.

The article reports on the 50% reduction in waste the school achieved in the first six weeks of the project resulting in a reduction in disposal costs of \$4,600 or more annually. The same edition of the Herald reported on the budget reductions and fiscal impacts schools around the State are facing. Implementing and expanding waste reduction and recycling programs at schools serves to raise environmental awareness among students, faculty and parents, and helps schools save money. For the coming school year additional funds have been allocated from the public education department budget to allow Kimberle to expand the Waste Free Schools program to an additional two to four schools, providing we can enlist the support of college interns.

Strategic Planning Impact

- A6a: Program focus on public awareness, increased diversion of organics and commercial wastes, proper management of hazardous and prohibited materials, litter abatement, and sustainability.
- A6c: Expand school education and outreach program through Waste Free Schools partnership and internships with local college students.


Jeff Lindenthal



Resolution 2008-09

Resolution Adopting a Ban on the Use of Styrofoam and Plastic Packaging

WHEREAS, Styrofoam and plastics are a growing and problematic part of the waste stream, and are harmful to human health and the environmental; and

WHEREAS, Styrofoam and plastic packaging containers are a prevalent form of waste found on the beaches and in the environment of Monterey County; and

WHEREAS, The Park District is committed to responsibly reducing, reusing and recycling waste materials before they enter the landfill; and

WHEREAS, bans of Styrofoam and plastic packaging are expanding in cities, counties, and special districts throughout California as a result of the growing consensus that these products are harmful to the environment and human health, and that there are better alternatives; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the District Board of Directors, in regular session on August 4, 2008, that The Park District adopts the following policy concerning the use of Styrofoam and plastic packaging:

1. The District will reduce and wherever practicable eliminate its use of Styrofoam and plastic packaging.
2. The District encourages all staff and volunteers to utilize refillable containers (reduce and reuse) over recyclable waste stream materials whenever possible while conducting District business;
3. Where practicable, the District will promote and encourage reduction and recycling of Styrofoam and plastics materials in its public information materials and messages;
4. Whenever possible, the District will promote and encourage the reduced use of, and alternatives for, Styrofoam and plastics by contracted food vendors. To this end, the District will include non-Styrofoam and non-plastic product requirements in its food vendor contract specifications.

PASSED AND ADOPTED at a regular meeting of the Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District Board of Directors in Seaside, California, this 4th day of August, 2008

Ayes:

Noes:

Mary Dainton, President
Board of Directors

Ben Post, Vice President
Board of Directors

ATTACHMENT 1

ZERO-WASTE LUNCHES

Students at Marshall Elementary reduced their lunch waste by half in the Waste Free Schools program

By KATHRYN MCKENZIE NICHOLS

Herald Correspondent

August 4, 2008

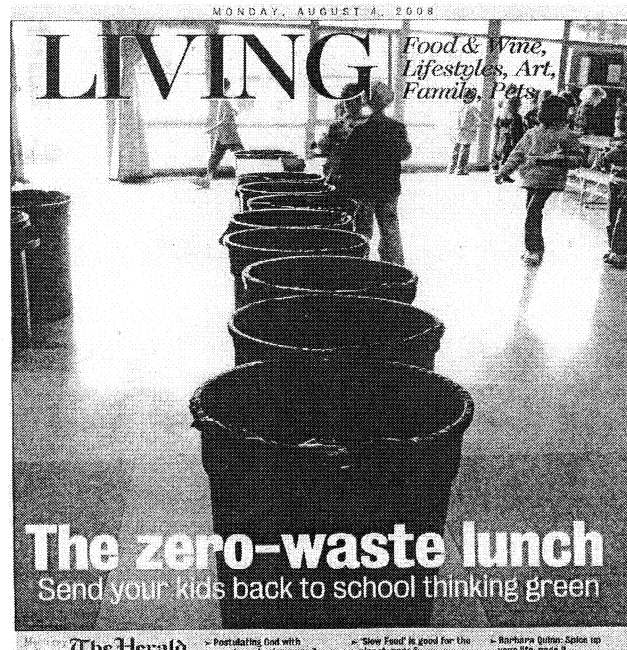
Parents are used to fixing a bag lunch for their youngsters when school starts, but have they ever considered a box lunch?

One way to cut down on waste from school lunches is to purchase a lunch box, either the traditional type or a Japanese-style set similar to a bento box. By using refillable containers that don't have to be thrown away, much or all of school lunch waste can be eliminated. And there you have it: the zero-waste lunch.

"It's been estimated that a student can generate 67 pounds of lunch-related waste per year," notes Kimberle Herring, public education coordinator for the Monterey Regional Waste Management District. And that adds up.

Students at Marshall Elementary School on the former Fort Ord reduced their lunch waste by half last year in the Waste Free Schools pilot program, organized by the MRWMD and modeled on a successful program in Santa Cruz. "We provided education for students and staff, and in six weeks reduced the lunch waste by 50 percent," said Herring. "We also were successful in promoting a Zero Waste Lunch Challenge — causing families to become more aware in general about waste generation, and specifically in encouraging waste free or lighter lunches."

The schoolwide effort increased recycling from classrooms, resulting in a 40 percent reduction in school garbage. Not only was this good for the Earth, but for the school's bottom line. Less garbage means reduced disposal costs, saving the school more than \$4,600 annually. "A typical size school in our area can generate 21,440 to 97,485 pounds of waste per year," says Herring.



She hopes that more Monterey Peninsula schools will take advantage of the Waste Free School program that is offered by the MRWMD, which has long offered education programs to local schools about waste reduction, reuse, recycling, and composting. "We hope to return next year to Marshall and expand upon this success, as well as introduce the program to additional schools in our service area," said Herring. So what can environmentally conscious parents do, especially with school just around the corner? In a word: planning.

Before you start groaning about yet another thing you have to do, consider that not only will you be doing something positive for the environment, you will save money in the long run. And you'll be setting a good example for your kids.

Many reusable lunch bags and boxes are available from a variety of sources. Some clever ones can be found at www.laptoplunches.com, www.reusablebags.com, and www.tupperware.com (the Lunch and Things container).

The Laptop Lunches site, started by two Santa Cruz moms, has great ideas for healthy box lunches. Their box lunch sets, modeled on bento boxes, have been featured on the "Today" show and in Parents magazine. Information on the site is updated monthly, with new tips and recipes.

True, there is an initial cost to purchasing a box or bag and any other accessories. But that saves you from buying plastic sandwich bags and juice boxes. Using a Thermos or other refillable drink container is essential. Disposable drink containers end up causing a lot of waste. You can pack cloth napkins rather than the paper type, and reusable eating utensils.

Parents will find that that they will save money by buying their child's favorite lunch items in bulk rather than individual packages. The small bags of cookies or chips are convenient, but always more expensive than packaging the same items yourself.

Another way to cut down on waste, Herring said, is simply to see how much your child is really eating, and to pack accordingly. Extra food tends to be thrown away, wasting not only the money you've spent on it, but also causing more trash.

One way to see this for yourself is to have your child bring home what they don't eat. That way, you can see what is going to waste. Packing a lighter lunch may be the solution, Herring said. "Only pack what your child can or will eat in 10 or 15 minutes," she said.

"Students are often distracted and anxious to get out to recess and what they don't eat ends up in the trash can." If you must pack disposable items, choose those which can be recycled, such as aluminum cans and items made of PETE (No. 1) plastic.

Of course, this will take some coordination with your child. Emphasize the importance of helping the Earth. Have them help you separate the recyclables at home, and talk about what steps you can take to cut down on waste. Parents and children can urge schools to adopt a waste reduction program.

There's no such thing as a free lunch — but at least by taking the right steps, it can be more Earth-friendly

Some tips Here are some tips from the Monterey Regional Waste Management District to cut down on lunch waste:

- Use reusable lunch bags or boxes. Pack food in reusable containers, rather than using plastic bags, foil or plastic wrap
- Bring drinks in refillable or recyclable containers. Save and reuse plastic bags, or use biodegradable bags
- Use cloth napkins rather than paper
- Pack reusable eating utensils

On the Web

- www.wastefreelunches.org
- www.laptoplunches.com
- www.reuseablebag.com
- www.passionpurveyors.com
- www.tupperware.com
- www.ciwmb.ca.gov
- www.gogreeninitiative.org

For more information about the Waste Free Schools program, contact Kimberle Herring at MRWMD, kherring@mrwmd.org or 384-3514.