

# **Labeling & Media Committee of the Statewide Commission on Recycling Markets and Curbside Recycling**

## **Approved Meeting Notes**

**Date:** July 31, 2020

**Time:** 12:00pm – 2:00pm

**Location:** Remote Webinar

### **Present:**

5 - Commissioners Davis, Dell, Donlevy, Schneider, Toyoda.

### **Absent:**

None

## **Committee Members**

- John Davis (John D.)– Mojave Desert and Mountain Recycling Authority, Zone Administrator
- Jan Dell (Jan D.) – The Last Beach Cleanup, Founder
- Jeff Donlevy (Jeff D.) - Ming's Recycling, General Manager
- Ann Schneider (Ann S.)– City of Millbrae, Vice Mayor
- Sara Toyoda (Sara T.) – City of Indio, Environmental Programs Coordinator

## **Agenda**

### **Agenda Item #1: Call to Order, Roll Call, and Establishment of Quorum**

Laura M. welcomes all to Labeling & Media Committee meeting and took roll call. All commissioners were present. Quorum was established.

Public Comments: None

### **Agenda Item #2: Public Comment Review - Items Not on the Agenda**

There was one comment read into the record from Neil Edgar. See Appendix 1 for full annotation of public comments.

### **Agenda Item #3: Selection of Chair and Vice-Chair**

Zoe H. provided opening remarks for the Committee Meeting and outlined the support that CalRecycle is able to provide for Committee Meetings.

Jan D. provided a summary of why she would like to become chair of the Committee. Commissioners voted on Jan D. for Chair:

Davis: Yes

Dell: Yes

Donlevy: Yes

Schneider: Yes

Toyoda: Yes

Commissioner Dell received a unanimous vote for Chair of the Committee and accepted.

Commissioners voted on Ann S. for Chair:

Davis: Yes

Dell: Yes

Donlevy: Yes

Schneider: Yes

Toyoda: Yes

Commissioner Schneider received a unanimous vote for Vice-Chair of the Committee and accepted.

Public Comments: None

### **Agenda Item #4: Determination of Scope**

Jan D. provided opening remarks regarding the scope of the Committee and how the Committee fits into the overall organization of the Commission.

After discussion, Chair Dell proposed the scope of the Committee include curbside bins for recycling, and residential and commercial bins for organics. Commissioners voted on this proposal:

Davis: Yes

Dell: Yes

Donlevy: Yes

Schneider: Yes

Toyoda: Yes

Commissioners expressed a need to discuss labeling and CalRecycle's Public Education Campaign.

Maria W. and Christina F. provided the scope of the CalRecycle Office of Public Affairs (OPA) as it relates to this Committee, including the Public Education and Outreach Campaign.

Chair Dell expressed the need to having a standing agenda item for CalRecycle's OPA to provide an update on the Public Education and Outreach Campaign. Chair Dell summarized that the Committee will cover curbside bins for recycling, and residential and commercial bins for organics as well as how to best label and communicate with the public.

Comments were read into the record from Sarah Solomon, anonymous, and Caren McNamara. See Appendix 1 for full annotation of public comments.

### **Agenda Item #5: Discussion of Invitation to Stakeholder Groups to Future Committee Meetings (15 min)**

Commissioners discussed a need to hear from waste haulers, regarding lessons learned to help the public understand how to recycle and how to create high quality marketable materials. Additionally, Commissioners would like to hear from groups who have led studies on contamination in California's curbside bins (The Recycling Partnership) and labelling (Greenpeace)

Comments were read into the record from Anonymous 2 and Anonymous 3. See Appendix 1 for full annotation of public comments.

### **Agenda Item #6: Discussion of Data and Information Needs (15 minutes)**

Commissioners would like more information on the Request for Proposal for the Public Education Campaign, existing labeling laws, the top ten cities with highest residuals and lowest residuals, and to hear from processors and composters.

Public Comments: None

## **Agenda Item #7: Next Meeting, Proposed Meeting Schedule for 2020-2021, and Agenda Items for Future Meetings (15 min)**

The next meeting of the Committee will be on Thursday, August 20 from 9-11 am.

Public Comments: None

## **Agenda Item #8: Meeting Summary and Closing (5 min)**

Chair Dell provided closing remarks and adjourned the meeting.

Public Comments: None

## **Appendix 1: Public Comments**

### **Neil S Edgar, California Compost Coalition**

Businesses, government entities, and individuals in California and across the country are seeking to conserve resources and reduce the environmental impacts associated with the landfilling of food scraps. To that end many of them have begun to utilize compostable food service packaging – often in conjunction with policies and ordinances mandating their purchase and use. Most often the implementation of policies and practices which endorse compostable packaging have not been established in consultation with the commercial compost manufacturers who receive these materials, or may have begun with no available composting capacity at all. Packaging and products made from compostable materials are not welcome at a majority of compost manufacturing facilities, especially those products which are not directly associated with food scrap recovery. While many facilities have continued to receive and process a mix of food scraps and compostable packaging, an increasing number of compost manufacturers are excluding the packaging as an acceptable feedstock for their operations: the vast majority of compostable packaging collected is sorted out and landfilled. Compostable packaging has issues which have negatively impacted compost manufacturers in the following areas: • Identification: Compostable packaging acts as a Trojan horse for contamination – it is difficult or impossible to identify compostable packaging and discern it from conventional materials. At most facilities that pre-process feedstocks, compostable packaging is sorted out and disposed of with other contaminants. • Performance: Compostable packaging may or may not degrade properly during the composting process due to variability in the material composition or the type of composting technology employed, despite meeting ASTM standards (D6400 or D6868) for compostability, causing contamination of the compost products, often with a multitude of microfragments typically remaining from heavier gauge containers and utensils. • Organic Status and Chemical Contamination: Compostable packaging is typically composed of synthetic materials, particularly compostable plastics, like PLA, which are not approved for use as organic inputs, meaning compost manufacturers are

sacrificing the marketability of their compost product. Numerous compostable fiber foodservice products have been identified as containing significant amounts of fluorine compounds (PFOS, PFAS, or others used as a grease barrier) which persist through the composting process. Biodegradable Products Institute (BPI) has implemented a policy, whereby they will no longer certify these compostable fiber products if they contain excessive fluorine levels, beginning in January 2020. BPI, however, does not certify all products in the market. Until the above issues are resolved to a significant degree, the value promise of compostable packaging as a significant contributor to food scrap recovery efforts will be impaired and the ability to expand programs which include packaging – and to develop infrastructure which can produce clean, high-value compost products – will be impacted. To be clear, compostable packaging which is not directly related to food scrap recovery has little to no value to compost manufacturers; recycling options for those materials need to be developed as a preferred option for truly sustainable recovery from landfill. Washington State has recently enacted HB 1569 which has established compostable products labeling requirements; any recommendations by CalRecycle should be an attempt to harmonize with those requirements. In my work as Chair of the US Composting Council's Legislative and Environmental Affairs Committee, we are working to establish national guidelines and avoid a piecemeal approach by states which will lead to confusion and make implementation difficult, if not impossible.

### **Caren McNamara, Conscious Container**

As this committee is considering labeling please consider 'reusable' labeling in the mix. This is a growing sector across many categories.

### **Sarah Solomon, Los Angeles County Public Works**

It would be helpful if this committee discussed some of the concerns below for the state of California. - Better product markings and education for waste items. Examples of products include tobacco products, solar panels, compostable plastics, household hazardous waste items, electronic waste, carpets, and batteries including lithium-ion batteries which can result in fires. -Require plastic number and/or recycling information to be on both the paper/plastic label of the container and on the container itself. -Clearly indicate if products are not recyclable or which parts of products are recyclable, such as plastic tofu or yogurt containers are recyclable but the plastic film they are sealed with is not.

### **Anonymous 1**

Hello, Thank you for hearing these most important issues for our communities. I would like to recommend that you consider the following in your efforts to improve both traditional and organics recycling: Remove the chasing arrows symbol from all plastics. We should create new labels for plastics. Provide more education about "best used by" dates versus "expiration dates," or consider developing standardized wording so that the meaning of the dates is clear. Clearly indicate to clean recyclables before placing

into the bin. Compostable and biodegradable are confusing terms for consumers and would be thought of interchangeably. There should be only one “compostable” standard that is very stringent (including no PFAS, for instance) and all other labels should be prohibited.

## **Anonymous 2**

John: <https://www.rs-e.com/>

## **Anonymous 3**

CalRecycle creates a survey poll... sends out thru LAMD reps to jurisdictions?