



A Public Agency

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

STAFF REPORT

To: SBWMA Board Members
From: Joe La Mariana, Executive Director
Date: November 16, 2023 Board of Directors Meeting
Subject: Executive Director's Report

Staff and agency partners continue to be hard at work supporting a variety of projects, programs, and facility initiatives. Here are the highlights:

1. Contractor Updates:

a. Recology San Mateo County (Recology)

Recology recently engaged in its third EV side loader vehicle in the RethinkWaste service area for a 4-day field test. The two previous EV pilot trucks were test-driven in our service area during the past two years. On November 1st, I was invited to join Recology's General Manager, John Zirelli, to ride along with this test vehicle as it collected organic materials in Burlingame. This vehicle was also field-tested in the operational hilly routes of Hillsborough in the days prior. I observed significant productivity improvements from the two previous pilot EV collection trucks, which was extremely encouraging. We commend Recology for their commitment to a future ZEV fleet.



Recology's ZEV Side loader test vehicle field test on November 1, 2023 (Autocar mfrg.)

In addition to these vehicle field tests, RethinkWaste staff and our technical consultants continue to scope and site plan the inbound electrical capacity needs to charge a commercial fleet of 200 EV's in the future. This project will have many supreme challenges, including PG&E's ability to provide this service, site space, major capital costs, etc.

I must also note that Recology experienced a serious electronic system breach on November 3rd resulting in a companywide shutdown, as of this writing, for four days. During this period, all transactions have been recorded manually and will be hand-uploaded to maintain data and reporting integrity. I've been apprised of their progress through Recology's local and corporate management. Recology has handled this unfortunate IT situation professionally throughout.

b. **South Bay Recycling (SBR) operations**

Reminder: On Sunday, December 31st, the Shoreway Facility will be closed to the public and will cease all operations to facilitate SBR's decommissioning and removal of its company-owned assets while SBI delivers, installs and commissions their assets so they're ready to assume full site operations at 12:01am on January 1st, 2024.

2. **Administration & Finance:**

a. **RethinkWaste's New Administrative Office: Project Update**

As of this writing, escrow is planned to close by November 15th at which time full ownership of this property will transfer to SBWMA. Staff is working diligently with our architect's, Gelfand Partner Architects (SF), the City of San Carlos' Planning and Building Staff and our contracted project manager, Common Goal Consulting, to expedite the design and construction of this important project. The next major project milestone is being considered today with agenda item 7A which addresses the solicitation of construction bids for this work.

3. **Committee Updates:**

a. **Finance Committee Meeting** (joint FY 2024 Budget study session held October 26)

b. **Legislative Committee** (November 6)

The Committee met to discuss priority topics for 2024 and discussed current legislative and regulatory issues. On October 10th, Governor Newsom signed into law SB 244, California's landmark *Right to Repair Act* which will require manufacturers to provide repair instructions and options for their products to reduce disposal of these products. RethinkWaste has been a prominent supporter of this law during its 10-year journey into law. RethinkWaste was featured in an LA Times article on November 8th (see **Attachment A**).

c. **Pub Ed/Outreach Committee** (no meeting held)

d. **Technical Advisory Committee** (no meeting held)

e. **Zero Waste Committee** (no meeting held)

4. **Collection and Recycling Program Support and Compliance:**

a. **SB 1383 - Contamination Monitoring Route Reviews**

RethinkWaste is working with SCS Engineers to put together a final report on the contamination monitoring route reviews completed in August. The reviews, required by SB 1383, have served as an important tool to identify items commonly misplaced in each waste stream on each Recology route.

Recology has provided each Member Agency their SB 1383 compliance status as of September 2023. Together, Recology and RethinkWaste are continuing to meet with Member Agencies to discuss the next steps with compliance and enforcement.

b. Community Outreach and Environmental Education

i. Outreach Updates

The Proper Sorting campaign ran from the end of July to early October. The campaign ran on the following channels: YouTube, streaming video, Facebook ads, streaming audio, Google Discovery ads and exterior bus ads. The main goal for the Proper Sorting Campaign was for general awareness, with a metric of impressions. The campaign reached 4,436,783 impressions using the above-mentioned multi-touch strategy. One of the most popular avenues was YouTube ads, which specifically received 598,425 impressions and 388,146 views with an average view rate of 62.61%, which is significantly higher than the industry standard of 31.9%. The average Engagement rate was 62.26%, which was also higher than the industry standard of 10-15%. Overall, the campaign was successful; however, some ads did not reach a younger audience and that will be the focus of future campaigns on this topic.



RethinkWaste staff are now currently working with contractor Gigantic Idea Studios to run a proper battery disposal campaign late this year into early next year.

RethinkWaste is also actively participating in San Mateo County's Compost Improvement Stakeholder Work Group that will lead to a Compost Improvement outreach campaign that is expected to run next year.

ii. Rethink Recycling Day was a success!

The 6th annual Rethink Recycling Day on October 21 was another successful in-person event. Staff hosted tours of the facility, a clothes mending workshop, kids crafting activity, shredding and honoring our Poster Contest winners. We had 97 attendees across all activities from nine of our member agencies and other surrounding cities. We also gathered both positive and constructive feedback from a post-event survey to improve for future events. See a few photos from the events in **Attachment B**.

iii. In-Schools Program Update

This month the Environmental Education (EE) Team has been busy conducting lunch bin monitoring at three different elementary schools throughout the service area: College Park Elementary (San Mateo), Heather Elementary (San Carlos) and Foster City Elementary (Foster City). The EE team also trained over 20 students at Foster City Elementary to be responsible members of the campus' Green Team, developed a new system for lunch tray

collection, and provided additional bins for students to sort the many different materials at lunch time. Additionally, the team provided guidance to students running Carlmont High School's news site, the *Scot Scoop*, through an educational interview and tour.

In early November, the team held a special presentation for a local Daisy Troop and partner with the County of San Mateo's Office of Sustainability to host assemblies for all grade levels (Kindergarten through 8th grade) at Roy Cloud Elementary in Redwood City.

iv. **Shoreway Tours**

The Shoreway Tours program continues to remain very popular. The team hosted seven different tours with large school groups in the past month for classes from Hillsborough, San Mateo, Redwood City, and Burlingame. Tour groups included college and high school classes from Cañada College and Burlingame High School. Special tours were held for colleagues from our Member Agencies in Foster City and Redwood City.

5. **Shoreway Operations, Capital Projects, and Contract Management**

a. **Shoreway Operations Contractor Transition Update**

SBI and SBWMA staff have held monthly meetings to review the many elements and tasks related to the transition of the new Shoreway Operations Agreement. SBI has been proactive in obtaining permits, equipment, systems, and employee training necessary to start operating the Shoreway Environmental Center on January 1, 2024. Because the Board will not meet again until January, staff wants to communicate that it is working closely with SBI and is confident that the transition will occur smoothly. Both SBR and SBI have been coordinating the withdrawal of old equipment and replacement with new trucks, loaders, and support equipment. SBWMA staff would like to thank both companies for their professionalism in this challenging process.

As of this writing, SBI reports that negotiations have successfully concluded with the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, local 350's two expiring contracts, subject to a final ratifying vote on the evening of November 16th. Upon their ratification, these new agreements will be valid through 2028 and is welcome news for all parties. Our agency extends its congratulations to Dwight Herring (SBI's General Manager), and the entire incoming SBI workforce.

b. **UST Planning and Construction**

SBWMA staff and CIC (the selected UST Contractor) have been reviewing site details and working on the design of the new system. CIC has submitted a draft schedule that shows completion of the project before the Water Board deadline of December 31, 2025. After designs are finalized, the contractor will seek approval by regulatory agencies and after approvals have been obtained, the new tanks will be ordered. Construction is not anticipated to start until summer 2025.

c. **MRF Phase II Sort System Retrofit**

A draft design of the container line retrofit is being refined and quoted. Staff has been working with multiple vendors to design a system that is minimally disruptive to the MRF operations and hopefully does not involve extended installation related MRF downtime. Staff will provide a more detailed update in January.

Respectfully submitted,



Joe La Mariana
Executive Director

Attachments:

Attachment A – LA Times article “Recyclers embrace ‘right to repair’ law” from November 8, 2023

Attachment B – Photos from Rethink Recycling Day

Recyclers embrace 'right to repair' law

Consumers will have access to tools and manuals to fix devices, resulting in less stuff going to landfills.

BY SUSANNE RUST

SAN CARLOS, Calif. — Joe La Mariana has seen it all; he got his sea legs in municipal waste 30 years ago. He's now the executive director of RethinkWaste — one of the Bay Area's largest and most innovative recycling centers, in San Carlos.

He said there are few pieces of legislation that get him as excited as California's new "right to repair" does.

"It's a game changer," he said, noting the legislation will reduce the number of items he has to send straight to the landfill and will open markets for materials — such as the rare earth minerals used in many batteries — that can be reused.

On Oct. 10, Gov. Gavin Newsom signed legislation that will provide Californians with the tools — the information, manuals and parts — they need to repair their cellphones, refrigerators, stoves and other electronic devices.

"Why do most 40-year-old refrigerators work like the day they were purchased but top-of-the-line new refrigerators barely last a decade if you're lucky? That's not innovation; that's planned obsolescence," said Nick Lapis, director of advocacy for Californians Against Waste, which lobbied for the legislation. "Not buying something new will almost always be better for the environment than recycling something and buying a replacement."

Because California is one of the world's largest economies, this law is likely to have



SUSANNE RUST Los Angeles Times

"PEOPLE THINK: Oh, this old cellphone or computer, it's recyclable. And they throw it in with their recyclables," said Joe La Mariana. He hopes the law will reduce the number of improperly disposed devices.

a domino effect across the country, Lapis said. Similar laws have been passed in New York, Colorado and Minnesota, although California's is considered tougher.

"If California were its own country, it would have the fourth-largest economy in the world, larger than the U.K., Germany or France. What we do here matters. It matters in and of itself, but it also matters around the country and on the global stage," Lapis said.

California's law requires that electronics manufacturers provide appropriate tools, parts, software and documentation for seven years after production for devices priced above \$100,

and three years for less expensive devices.

Any company that fails to follow these rules will be fined \$1,000 per day for the first violation, \$2,000 per day for the second, and subsequently, any further violations will attract a \$5,000-per-day fine.

State Sen. Susan Talamantes Eggman (D-Stockton) sponsored the bill.

Both Apple and HP supported the bill this year, along with 82 independent repair shops, 109 local elected officials and more than 50 environmental and consumer groups.

La Mariana said there are the obvious benefits of the law (allowing consumers the opportunity to fix an

item if it's broken, rather than just tossing it) as well as environmental benefits (less garbage in the waste stream).

But it will also help his business avoid costly accidents and potential injuries.

RethinkWaste is publicly owned and governed by local municipalities. La Mariana said in addition to waste and recycling material, it takes electronic waste and disposes of it for free for residents.

"But people think: Oh, this old cellphone or computer, it's recyclable. And they throw it in with their recyclables," he said during a recent tour of the San Carlos Shoreway Environmental Center.

"You see the mechanized equipment here?" he said, pointing to a three-story-high conveyor belt that moves waste through a row of human sorters, and then through a series of high-tech robots that image and sort waste depending on its composition. "When it gets in there, it creates fires."

He said there's at least one fire a month at the center, due to improperly tossed electronics — including a four-alarm fire in 2018 that almost burned the place to the ground, causing the center to close for four months at a cost of \$8.5 million. He said power cords are another problem because they tangle the belts and gears of the machinery.

Attachment A: Photos from Rethink Recycling Day on October 21, 2023



Board Members Adam Loraine and Al Royse with Executive Director Joe La Mariana and four of our Poster Contest winners.



Kids participating in the crating activity.





Participants in the Clothes Mending Workshop.



Staff giving a tour of the Shoreway Environmental Center.