



For Immediate Release

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SHOREWAY ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER'S RECYCLING FACILITY RE-OPENS
*Recycling Facility Repairs Completed Ahead of Schedule and 35 Facility Workers Are Now Back to Work
Over \$6 million spent on Restoration Work*

SAN CARLOS, CA – February 6, 2017 - RethinkWaste is pleased to announce the re-opening of the Shoreway Environmental Center's Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) on January 10, 2017, about 3 months ahead of projections. The facility is located at 333 Shoreway Road in San Carlos, and it has now resumed full operations by processing over 350 tons of mixed recyclables a day. The Recycling Facility experienced a 4-alarm fire on September 7, 2016 which caused significant damage to the processing line equipment and the building structure. No facility workers were injured during this incident. As a result of this unfortunate incident, all operations ceased and 35 workers were furloughed during the site cleanup, equipment replacement and repairs.

While the exact cause of the fire is not certain, inspectors believe that it was likely the result of a rechargeable battery that was wrongly included inside a blue recycling cart. For safety sake, RethinkWaste strongly encourages all residents and businesses to recycle batteries by only putting them in a plastic bag on top of the blue recycling carts. This practice will help maintain the safety of our colleagues and the facility in the future.

The extreme collaborative efforts by RethinkWaste technical staff, our contractors, South Bay Recycling and Recology, and our associated specialized processing equipment, construction management and insurance partners, resulted in the expedited repair work. This phase of the work cost over \$6.5 million to restore and replace the damaged equipment and building systems caused by the fire. An additional \$170K of building and roof repair work is estimated to conclude by late April. These costs have now been fully reimbursed by the agency's fire insurance provider, Hanover insurance, less a modest \$5,000 deductible. RethinkWaste also incurred approximately \$1.3 million in business interruption expenses during the facility closure period. These expenses are currently under review by the Hanover Insurance claims team.

The 35 facility workers who were temporarily laid off while the MRF was down are now back at work much sooner than projected. All materials were processed at nearby recycling facilities and no

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recycling materials were landfilled. *“We are happy to be back at work providing the vital recycling services that the community relies on”* says Hilary Gans, from RethinkWaste.

RethinkWaste Executive Director, Joe La Mariana, stated *“We’re absolutely thrilled that none of our hardworking colleagues were injured during the fire and that evacuation procedures were all by the book. The expedited facility restoration was an extraordinary team effort led by RethinkWaste staff, and our strong partners at South Bay Recycling, Recology, Tanner Construction, BHS Equipment manufacturers, and the Hanover Insurance claims team. I also want to acknowledge the three processors in San Jose and Oakland that handled our materials on an emergency basis during the plant closure. It’s really a great feeling knowing that we work with such a well-regarded, professional team that was so committed to getting us back on track”*.

Public Education Tours Resumed February 1st:

On February 1st, RethinkWaste restored the free School Groups and Public Tour Program held at the Shoreway MRF. *“We’re pleased that our Recycling Facility is back online, and excited to host teachers, students and the general public at the Shoreway Environmental Center.”* said Faustina Mututa, RethinkWaste Environmental Education Coordinator. While the facility was closed for repairs, RethinkWaste staff conducted over 20 in-class environmental education sessions to almost 1,000 students in our service area.

The approximately two-hour tour includes visiting the Transfer Station, where garbage, food scraps and yard trimmings are handled; the restored Recycling Facility (also known as a “MRF”), where recyclables are processed; the Environmental Education Center, which includes museum-quality exhibits, reuse art and a talking robot; and more. It also includes hands-on learning activities and pre- and post-tour lessons. In addition, the Environmental Education Center has a 10,000-gallon rainwater harvest tank and composting and gardening demonstration area, enabling students and visitors to take back tips on how to conserve natural resources and maintain healthy sustainable gardens at school and at home.

Public Open House Tours will resume every 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month starting in February. The public tours are given from 9:30am-10:30am and 11:30am-12:30pm. Schools and the public can schedule a tour by sending an email to tours@rethinkwaste.org, or calling (650) 802-3506. All tours will be scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis.

Earth Day Public Open House:

RethinkWaste and its contracting partners, Recology and South Bay Recycling, will be hosting our annual Earth Day public open house at the Shoreway Environmental Center on Saturday, April 8th from 10am-1pm. Details will follow in a separate press release.

RethinkWaste

RethinkWaste is a joint powers authority of twelve public Agencies (Atherton, Belmont, Burlingame, East Palo Alto, Foster City, Hillsborough, Menlo Park, Redwood City, San Carlos, San Mateo, the County of San Mateo and the West Bay Sanitary District) in San Mateo County, California and is a leader in the delivery of innovative waste reduction and recycling programs. RethinkWaste owns and manages the award-winning Shoreway Environmental Center which receives all the recyclables, organics, and materials (i.e. solid waste) collected in its service area. RethinkWaste’s environmental education and tour program has also received state and national awards and hosts over five-thousand visitors per

year. RethinkWaste also provides strategic oversight, support and management of service providers that collect, process, recycle and dispose of materials for its Member Agencies. RethinkWaste (i.e., South Bayside Waste Management Authority) was formed in 1982. For more information on RethinkWaste, please visit our website at www.RethinkWaste.org or follow us at www.Facebook.com/rethinkwaste or www.Twitter.com/rethinkwaste.

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