

**SANTA BARBARA COUNTY
BOARD AGENDA LETTER**



Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
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2006 MAR 30 PM 3:09
COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA
CLERK OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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Prepared on: 3/21/06
Department Name: Public Works
Department No.: 054
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TO: Board of Supervisors
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STAFF CONTACT: Mark Schleich, Deputy Director, ext. 3605
Resource Recovery & Waste Management Division
SUBJECT: Update on County's Current and Future Waste Diversion Efforts

2006 MAR 30 PM 3:09
COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA
CLERK OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Recommendation(s):

APR 11 2006

That the Board of Supervisors:

Set a departmental hearing for April 18, 2006 to:

- 1) Receive an update on the County's waste diversion efforts currently certified at 62%;
- 2) Approve near-term recommendations to enhance the County's current diversion level (65-67%);
- 3) Direct staff to return to your Board with an update on how the efforts of the Multi-Jurisdictional Solid Waste Task Group may be integrated with potential County diversion goals and the associated costs of those options.

Alignment with Board Strategic Plan:

The recommendation is primarily aligned with Goal No. 5. A High Quality of Life for All Residents.

Executive Summary and Discussion:

With the passage of the California Integrated Waste Management Act, also known as AB939, by the California state legislature in 1989, the manner in which solid waste is managed in Santa Barbara County has changed significantly. A variety of resource recovery programs have been implemented and the primary means of managing waste generated in the County has shifted from landfilling to recycling valuable resources. As a result of these programs, the County has a certified diversion level of 62% and estimate that this level will increase to 64% this year. This Board Letter briefly highlights the changes made, updates your Board on where the County stands with regards to compliance with AB939, and future possibilities for increasing the diversion of waste generated in our community.

AB939

The California Integrated Waste Management Act (AB939) was passed by the California state legislature in 1989 to address a national concern with the growing amount of waste generated in each community, a perceived lack of sufficient landfill capacity, and the ability to recycle a significant portion of the waste being landfilled. The key components of the legislation required the following:

- Each community to divert 25% of waste generated by 1995
- Each community to divert 50% of waste generated by 2000

AB939 has subsequently been amended to require the maintenance of 50% diversion beyond the year 2000. There have been several legislative proposals to raise the diversion level above 50% but none of these proposals have been approved by the legislature. Annually, each community is required to report their diversion level to the state as well as update the state on what programs are currently in effect in their community.

Consistent Success in Recycling

In 1990, the County had a documented diversion rate of 11%. In response to the passage of AB939, a number of programs highlighted below were implemented in the early 1990s:

- In 1990, the County implemented a three-bin recycling program available to a majority of its residents requiring participants to separate their recyclables into separate bins for newspapers, glass, and all other containers.
- In 1990, the County began grinding green waste collected at its South Coast Transfer Station for reuse.
- In the early 1990s, the County began extensive public education campaigns encouraging source reduction and recycling of waste.

In 1995, the County's diversion rate grew to 30%, surpassing the state goal of 25%. As the technology for sorting waste developed further, the County was able to implement the following programs in the late 1990s and 2000.

- In 1996, the County negotiated new franchise agreements with its service providers including the implementation of a new collection system that was developed with community input including one can for the collection of commingled recyclables (no need to separate the recyclables in separate bins), one can for the collection of green waste, and a third can for the collection of trash. In addition, the franchisees were required to meet specific performance criteria including diversion levels. This new system was rolled out in July of 1997 and resulted in a 400% increase in the quantity of recyclables collected.
- In 2000, the County focused its efforts on the diversion of construction and demolition (C&D) debris. A diversified program was developed including the sorting of C&D at County facilities, creating a market incentive for residents to sort material by accepting recyclables at a lower rate than trash, and extending the franchise agreements for MarBorg Industries to allow the construction of a state-of-the-art C&D sorting facility in the County.

As a result of these programs, in 2000, the County's diversion level continued to increase to 59%, exceeding the state goal of 50%.

The programs already implemented continued to expand as the public's participation in them grew. **In 2002, the state certified the County's diversion rate at 62%.** In 2003, your Board approved a mandatory recycling program for businesses. At this point, residents were doing an excellent job of recycling at their homes but businesses needed improvement. The County had encouraged business recycling through a voluntary program including outreach campaigns making sure businesses were aware that they could recycle but the County was not getting a significant response to this approach. The mandatory program included a 20% surcharge on the trash bill of a business that did not recycle. Out of 1,500 firms, only 5 have not implemented a recycling program, making this latest effort an outstanding success.

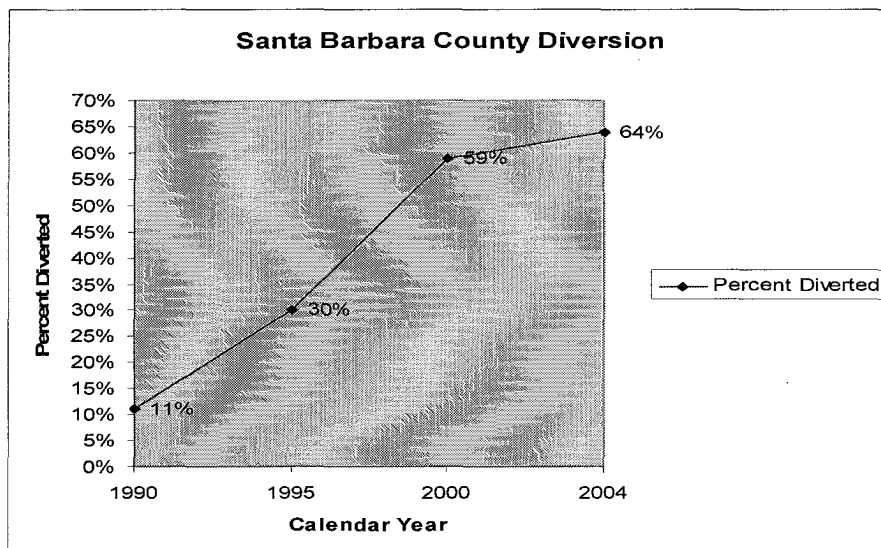
Public Education

Throughout the implementation of all these programs, several public outreach campaigns have been implemented including:

- contracting with educators to instruct students on the importance of conserving and reusing resources,
- implementing recycling programs in schools,
- preparing a Resource Recycling Guide for Santa Barbara County that is updated regularly,
- maintaining a hotline containing recycling information,
- maintaining a WebSite containing recycling information,
- distributing brochures containing information specific to each program,
- running television advertisements specific to each program, and
- airing radio advertisements focusing on a specific campaign.

County's Successful Diversion Rate

The successful implementation of these programs has resulted in an outstanding level of diversion for the County. As indicated above, the latest diversion rate certified by the state is 62% for calendar year 2002. However, the state has recently issued information necessary for each community to compute its diversion rate for calendar year 2004. **The County has calculated a diversion level of 64% for 2004.** This calculation will be reviewed by the state this year. The County's continuing recycling success can be attributed to the implementation of innovative programs, cooperative partnerships with the private and non-profit sectors, and a responsive public. Below is a graph illustrating the County's reported diversion level since 1990.



For comparison purposes, the County's diversion level is in the top 10% of all jurisdictions in the state. Within Santa Barbara County itself, all other jurisdictions have certified diversion rates ranging from a low of 38% in Guadalupe to a high of 53% in Lompoc.

Future Programs for Board Consideration

There are still several programs that can be implemented to improve the efficiency of the County's recycling program without incurring a significant cost to the County or the ratepayers. These programs would continue to increase the County's diversion level but to a smaller extent. In order to maximize the recycling or reuse of waste still being landfilled, the County would have to consider the construction of facilities recommended by the Multi-Jurisdictional Solid Waste Task Group (MJSWTG). The following briefly summarizes the programs that can be implemented in the near-term and highlights the facilities that have been recommended by the MJSWTG to allow the County to attain higher diversion levels.

Near-Term Programs

In the near-term, County staff are proposing to increase diversion through changes made to the collection system and by implementing a construction and demolition debris recycling program. Staff are proposing to include a rate for the collection of a single can of trash in the rate schedule for the South Coast for fiscal year 06/07 to create a further incentive to generate less waste. North County rates already include this minimum service level. Staff has also asked the franchisees to provide an estimated cost to increase commingled recyclables collection from every other week to once per week. Once the estimates are received, staff will evaluate this cost to the overall system and share the information with you Board. Lastly, staff is proposing to evaluate the potential to expand the current source-separated system offered to residents to ranches in Santa Ynez Valley. Currently, many of the ranches dispose of all waste in a single bin not allowing the recycling of appropriate materials.

The County has been participating in a regional planning effort including all jurisdictions in the County as well as representation from Special Districts. This effort has been spearheaded by the Multi-Jurisdictional Solid Waste Task Group which has been meeting since 2002. The MJSWTG has compiled a long-term management plan for solid waste which was approved in concept by each jurisdiction in the County in 2004. One of the recommendations included in the plan was the implementation of a C&D debris recycling program. County staff is in the process of developing this plan and will be presenting it to your Board in May 2006. The intent of the plan is to take advantage of the existing infrastructure to encourage the maximum recycling of C&D debris.

The proposed changes to the collection agreements as well as implementation of a C&D debris recycling program will enhance the County's current recycling efforts, however the County will not achieve significantly higher levels of diversion, not more than an estimated 1 to 3 additional diversion points, by implementing these low cost programs. Therefore, the County's diversion level is not expected to exceed 65-67% as a result of implementing these programs. In order to achieve a higher level of diversion, the County will need to participate in the evaluation of future regional waste diversion facilities.

Long-Term

In the long-term, the MJSWTG identified several potential future facilities for the South Coast, and County staff is currently evaluating or participating in the regional evaluation of the following:

- Expand household hazardous waste collection capacity at UCSB;
- Participate in a feasibility study of siting a local material recovery facility;
- Evaluate the emissions testing of conversion technologies being conducted by the APCD;
- Project phasing of conversion technologies:
 - Constructing a dirty MRF
 - Constructing a conversion technology or co-composting facility

Once the costs and feasibility of constructing these regional facilities, and the effect they would have on the County's diversion rate, is better known, staff will return to your Board for further discussion.

Conclusion

The County has been very proactive and successful in implementing a wide range of recycling programs countywide. Each program has been tailored to meet the needs of the targeted community. The County was certified by the state at a diversion level of 62% for 2002. As of 2004, the County has achieved an estimated waste diversion level of 64%, greatly surpassing the state mandate of 50%. There continue to be opportunities to enhance our current diversion level (an additional 1 to 3 percent) but in order to achieve significantly higher levels of diversion, the construction of a new facility will be required. County staff is in the process of evaluating the cost of these alternatives through its regional planning efforts as well as analyzing the effect of different facilities on the bottom line of the Resource Recovery & Waste Management Division. Staff will return to your Board with an update on how the efforts of the MJSWTG may be integrated with potential County diversion goals once the associated costs and feasibility of implementation are better known.

Mandates and Service Levels:

This Board Letter serves as an update of the progress made by the County of Santa Barbara in complying with AB939. Any future action affecting service levels would be brought to your Board for approval.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

This Board Letter serves as an update only therefore there are no fiscal or facility impacts associated with it.

Special Instructions: None

Board Letter authored by Leslie Wells, Program Manager, Resource Recovery & Waste Management Division.