

## CRRA Conference Notes

August 16-20, 2020

Attendees: Angela Goebel, Zoe Shoats, Timothy Flanagan, Peter Skinner

CRRA hosted its first digital conference, which was well-attended by over 550 people. Angela Goebel and Zoe Shoats **represented the District on a panel *Mind the Gap: Public Outreach and Field Data***, which had about 80 attendees. Zoe moderated the panel, and Angela gave the talk “Combat Contamination and Re-engage Residents through Digital Communications.” Her talk focused on how the District has used the What Goes Where app, as well as data from its public opinion survey and recycling contamination characterizations, to expand its outreach and reduce recycling contamination. A [full synopsis is available on CRRA’s website](#) and a video recording will be available to CRRA members soon.

**Industry challenges in relation to COVID-19** were discussed during the *Policy Roundtable* and in talks throughout the conference. Reusable ordinances are being enforced differently county-to-county due to health safety, including the ability to use reusable bags, buy in bulk, redeem milk jugs, and reuse CSA farm boxes. There has also been a constraint on in-person outreach, although haulers and cities are beginning to adapt by offering virtual waste trainings and educational programs. One upside to the pandemic is that there has been an increased interest in home composting.

**Recycling markets and the California Redemption Value (CRV)** program continue to be challenged, as discussed in the panels. Recycling commodity values crashed in 2020 due to the pandemic and the economy, although most have been recovering. At the talk *Statewide Dialogue Update: The Recycling Crisis in California*, Jeff Donlevy from Ming’s Resources East Bay reported that the price of aluminum has seen a 20-30% drop in value and the price of PET plastic is down 50% this year. This has further strained already struggling CRV centers. Susan Collins from the Container Recycling Institute, 400 CRV centers closed in 2019 and half of all sites (about 1300) have closed since 2013. The redemption centers continue to be underpaid (payments have been more than \$60 million short of CRV operating costs over the last 5 years per CalRecycle data) and none of the \$5 million allocated to pilot programs happened. Statewide, there are 4,000 convenience zones that are supposed to be served and only 1,251 CRV sites. Lastly, per Mark Murray from Californian’s Against Waste, in 2019-20, none of the major recycling bills have passed as hoped, including a bottle bill to ensure funding for CRV centers, minimum recycled content policy, or comprehensive plastics bill.

**CA SB 1383**, the Short-Lived Climate Pollutants Act, continued to be a major focus this year, since state legislation requires programs to be in place by January 2022. The final regulations are expected to be complete in September 2020. SB 1383 has a number of components, including recovering organics from the landfill and putting them to beneficial use, including edible food recovery. There will also be education and reporting requirements. Scott Beckner, director of CalRecycle, explained in his talk *The big lift: meeting SB 1383’s ambitious procurement requirements* that under the law, recovered waste products can be turned into mulch, renewable fuel, renewable heat, compost, renewable electricity, or electricity from biomass. Each jurisdiction will have a procurement target (tons of raw organic feedstock) that is calculated based on the jurisdiction’s population. HF&H Consulting, (who works with the District’s Technical Advisory Committee) is working with CalRecycle to develop *SB 1383 Model Tools*, including a franchise agreement, mandatory organics disposal reduction ordinance, procurement policy, and food recovery agreement. These tools will be available for all jurisdictions statewide to use as templates. There are also case studies of implemented programs available on CalRecycle’s website, as discussed at *SB 1383 Compliance Options – Eight Real World Case Studies*.