



Memorandum

MONTEREY REGIONAL WASTE MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

DATE: August 20, 2021
TO: Board of Directors
FROM: Director of Communications, Zoë Shoats
SUBJECT: Update on Technical Advisory Committee and SB 1383

RECOMMENDATION: Receive report

BACKGROUND

The District's Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) comprised of staff from each member jurisdiction, the three haulers in the District service area, and MRWMD staff, have been working collaboratively for approximately one year planning for SB 1383, California's Short-Lived Climate Pollutants regulation. The regulation will have significant impact on each member jurisdiction with the goal of reducing organic material from being landfilled by 75% by 2025. The regulation also requires 20% recovery of disposed edible food by 2025. Regulations take effect and local program implementation will occur January 1, 2022.

The District in coordination with our composting operator Keith Day Company, the TAC Collection and Education Subcommittee consisting of member jurisdictions and the haulers, and consultants HF&H, discussed various approaches to a residential acceptance list. Concerns were raised surrounding contamination and impacts of "compostable" plastics and food-soiled paper on the end product, which is marketed to local agriculture. As such, the recommendation was made to the TAC to consider a narrower food-only approach to our acceptance list, noting that as processing and technology could impact future operations, the list could easily be expanded, but that removing items in the future from an established program would be much more difficult. (Please see attached acceptance for details.)

Another benefit to this more limited food-only approach to an acceptance list is that it aligns with what Salinas Valley Recycles plans to implement. And with Santa Cruz County and surrounding cities also considering processing their food waste at MRWMD, a regional approach could be achieved. This is beneficial for consistency in public education and outreach efforts. More details on how we plan to promote the program and educate the public about the acceptance list are forthcoming.

The commercial food scrap program acceptance list will not change under SB 1383. Commercial food waste will continue to be processed separately from what will become a co-mingled food scraps and yard trimmings collection residentially.

A drawback to the food-only residential approach is that it does not fully-align with single-use plastic ordinances in the cities of Carmel, Pacific Grove and Seaside that promote the use of “compostable” plastics. While compostable plastics will continue to be accepted in the commercial program; they will not be accepted residentially. Regardless, the District still feels that this is the best approach as compostable plastics do not break down well in composting operations and thus ultimately being landfilled while making the end-product difficult to market. Compostable plastics will, however, break down faster in the landfill than plastics and could be included in the future, thus making them a better choice than traditional plastic.

With support of the TAC at their August meeting, staff plans to implement the attached residential acceptance list for the January 2022 implementation.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

None

MRWMD SB 1383 Residential Food Scrap Acceptance List

Effective January 2022

Approach: Develop a residential “food scrap” collection service keeping the acceptance list to food items only to avoid contamination. Anything that can be eaten or grown in your garden, is accepted in the green cart with your yard trimmings for composting. Anything that cannot be eaten (e.g., “compostable” plastics and food-soiled paper) could lead to PFAS* in the system, something that contaminates the environment and will likely be federally required to mitigate.

In an effort to avoid unnecessary product production and reduce waste generation, the District and its member agencies are not automatically offering kitchen pails or bio bags to residents. Rather, we encourage residents to find an underutilized bowl, bucket, or container that can be placed on or under the countertop or in the freezer, to collect food scraps. Covering your container and taking food scraps out to the green cart at least every three (3) days will minimize insects and odors in the home. Freezing food scraps can help prevent odors from spoiling food. A limited supply of food pails will be offered to residents free of charge should they wish to pick them up from their hauler or their member agency.

Accepted – Food Scraps Only

- All unpackaged food scraps
 - Fruits
 - Vegetables
 - Egg Shells
 - Nuts
 - Shellfish
 - Cooked meats
 - Bones
 - Starches & grains (bread, baked goods, cereals, pizza, tortillas, chips, rice)
 - Cheese/Dairy (no liquid)
 - All prepared foods
 - Flowers and plants
 - Food-soiled paper (only items listed below)
 - Coffee grounds and paper coffee filters (no coffee capsules, e.g., Keurig, Nespresso, etc.)
 - Tea and tea bags (paper tea bags only, no staples)
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Not Accepted – Everything Else

- Food packaging (bags, containers, rubber bands, and ties)
- “Compostable” plastics (clamshells, cups, service ware, etc.)
- Plastic bags (BPI-certified bags accepted, but not encouraged – encourage washing of kitchen pail/vessel)
- Liquids (milk, oil, grease, soup, water)
- Raw meats
- Paper towels, napkins, and tissues
- Paper plates and cups
- Pet waste/kitty litter
- Recyclable items
 - Glass
 - Plastic
 - Metal
 - Mixed paper & cardboard
- Trash

*Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a group of man-made chemicals. They are found in a wide range of consumer products that people use daily such as cookware, pizza boxes and stain repellants. Most people have been exposed to PFAS. Certain PFAS can accumulate and stay in the human body for long periods of time. There is evidence that exposure to PFAS can lead to adverse health outcomes in humans. The most-studied PFAS chemicals are PFOA and PFOS. Studies indicate that PFOA and PFOS can cause reproductive and developmental, liver and kidney, and immunological effects in laboratory animals. Both chemicals have caused tumors in animals. The most consistent findings are increased cholesterol levels among exposed populations, with more limited findings related to: low infant birth weights, effects on the immune system, cancer (for PFOA), and thyroid hormone disruption (for PFOS). (Source: <https://www.epa.gov/pfas/basic-information-pfas>)