



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

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Businesses, Apartments, Schools to Start Recycling Programs

SACRAMENTO – California is going greener than ever this year as businesses, schools, and apartment complexes start recycling programs to help meet a state recycling goal of 75 percent by the year 2020.

A state law that goes into effect July 1 requires businesses and public entities that generate 4 cubic yards or more of waste to establish a recycling program. Schools and multifamily apartments with five or more units are included. Local jurisdictions are responsible for education, outreach, and monitoring for the new law.

“Recycling is a powerful fuel that propels California’s engine,” said Assemblymember Wes Chesbro, who sponsored the legislation (AB 341, Chapter 476, Statutes of 2011). “California’s commitment to recycling has created 125,000 new jobs over the past two decades. The industry generates \$4 billion a year in salaries and produces \$10 billion worth of goods and services annually.”

The commercial sector (including multifamily complexes with 5 units or more) generates nearly three-fourths of all solid waste in California. Most of the material disposed from these businesses is readily recyclable. While the state currently has a recycling rate of more than 60 percent, the new law sets a state recycling goal of 75 percent by the year 2020.

AB 341, the first state law of its kind in the nation, keeps California at the forefront of environmental protection while boosting the economy. In fact, since recycling rates are lower than disposal costs, the Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle) estimates the new requirements will result in cumulative cost savings of \$40 million to \$60 million per year for businesses, schools, and local jurisdictions from 2012-2020.

“Recycling helps conserve resources, extends the life of California’s landfills, and helps create a healthy environment for our communities and future generations,” said Carroll Mortensen, director of CalRecycle. “When you look at the savings in disposal costs over time, it also just makes good business sense.”

While CalRecycle is responsible for implementing the commercial recycling law and for creating strategies to reach a 75 percent recycling rate by 2020, local jurisdictions are responsible for informing businesses of the new recycling requirement, tracking recycling at commercial businesses, and reporting results to CalRecycle each year.

They may use commercial recycling outreach materials and programs they currently have in place, or develop new programs, as long as they include education, outreach, and monitoring. CalRecycle has contracted with the Institute for Local Government to provide free webinars, downloadable templates for outreach and education, and a sample commercial recycling ordinance. These materials are available at www.ca-ilg.org/commercialrecycling.

CalRecycle staff are available to guide jurisdictions in meeting the requirements of the law. Each jurisdiction should communicate with its local recycling coordinator to discuss a reasonable time period to phase in its program. Find your recycling coordinator and contact information on CalRecycle’s website at <http://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/AboutUs/programresp/MMLA.htm>.

Jurisdictions may use their city or county payments for Mandatory Commercial Recycling outreach as long as the outreach materials include beverage container recycling information. For more information on CalRecycle’s City/County Payment Program, go to www.calrecycle.ca.gov/BevContainer/Grants/CityCounty/default.htm.

California’s existing recycling infrastructure makes recycling simple and cost-effective. From mom-and-pop stores to multinational corporations operating in California, businesses have saved from hundreds to hundreds of thousands of dollars each year by diverting a portion of their waste from landfills. Schools often use recycling programs as fund-raisers. Schools and businesses will continue to have the option to sell their recyclable materials.

The state’s new commercial recycling regulations recognize that each jurisdiction is unique and allow great flexibility for program implementation. By avoiding a “one-size-fits-all” approach, the regulations

allow local jurisdictions and businesses to determine what type of recycling program would be most effective and convenient. They can select from any one or a combination of the following activities:

- Separate recyclable materials from their solid waste stream and self-haul, subscribe to a hauler, and/or allow the pickup of recyclables, so that the separated material is diverted from disposal to recycling, reuse, or composting activities; and/or
- Subscribe to a recycling service that includes mixed-waste processing and yields diversion results comparable to source separation.

Increasing the state's recycling rate will ensure recyclable materials from businesses reach a higher end use and stay out of landfills. Having more recyclable materials in the market will help create recycling and manufacturing jobs and increase California's competitiveness. At the same time, recycling lowers greenhouse gas emissions because it often takes less energy to create products with recycled material than it does to manufacture new products with raw material.

Find out more about Assembly Bill 341 and Mandatory Commercial Recycling at <http://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/climate/Recycling/default.htm>.

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CalRecycle is the state's leading authority on recycling, waste reduction, and product reuse. CalRecycle plays an important role in the stewardship of California's vast resources and promotes innovation in technology to encourage economic and environmental sustainability. For more information, visit www.calrecycle.ca.gov.