

BACKGROUND

The California Air Resources Board Scoping Plan for the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (AB 32, Núñez, Chapter 488, Statutes of 2006) was adopted with a Mandatory Commercial Recycling measure designed to achieve a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions of 5 million metric tons of carbon dioxide (CO₂) equivalents.

Increasing waste diversion from landfills beyond the 2008 rate of 59 percent can provide additional recovery of recyclable materials that will directly reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Recycled materials can reduce the greenhouse gas emissions from multiple phases of product production including extraction of raw materials, preprocessing and manufacturing. A co-benefit of increased recycling is avoided methane emissions at landfills from the decomposition of organic materials. Use of composted organic materials also provides environmental benefits such as carbon storage in soils and reduced use of fertilizers, pesticides, and water.

According to 2008 Statewide Waste Characterization data, the commercial sector generates more than half of the solid waste in California (approximately 68 percent of waste disposed). While significant commercial recycling already occurs, much of the commercial sector waste disposed in landfills is clean enough to be recycled. The commercial sector, however, is not directly subject to the requirements of the Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989, (AB 939, Sher, Chapter 1095, Statutes of 1989), to divert waste from landfills.

As a result, the mandatory commercial recycling measure focuses on increased commercial waste diversion as a method to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. To achieve the measure's objective, an additional 2 to 3 million tons of materials will need to be recycled from the commercial sector by the year 2020 and beyond.

The California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle) is engaged in an informal rulemaking process while developing the mandatory commercial recycling measure. This is the third informal public workshop held on this topic. Prior workshop information is available at <http://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/Climate/Recycling/Workshops/default.htm>. The focus of this workshop will be the overall rulemaking process and highlighting key issues such as recycling infrastructure, enforcement and other related dynamics affecting commercial recycling. Stakeholder comment is requested by June 30, 2010 (lamd@calrecycle.ca.gov).