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## **Report Topic**

### **Report to the Legislature: Large Venue and Event Waste Reduction, Recycling, and Composting Programs**



California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery

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NOTE: Subsequent to the completion of this study and the preparation of this report, legislation (SB 63, Strickland) signed into law by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger eliminated the California Integrated Waste Management Board and its six-member governing board effective Dec. 31, 2009.

CIWMB programs and oversight responsibilities were retained and reorganized, effective Jan. 1, 2010, and merged with the beverage container recycling program previously managed by the California Department of Conservation.

The new entity is known as the Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle) and is part of the California Natural Resources Agency. It is no longer part of the California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal/EPA), which is referenced throughout this report.

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Assembly Bill (AB) 2176 (Montanez) Chapter 879, Statutes of 2004 was enacted to create and encourage planning and implementing waste reduction, recycling, and composting programs at large venues and events<sup>1</sup>. The law requires large venues and events to develop waste management plans and provide waste generation and diversion data to local agencies. Jurisdictions are required to provide this data to the California Integrated Waste Management Board as part of their mandated AB 939 (Sher, Chapter 1095, Statutes of 1989) Annual Reports. Then, the Board is required to evaluate large venue and event waste reduction efforts as reported by local agencies. If the Board's evaluation determines that fewer than 75 percent of the plans for the large venues and events had been prepared or implemented, then the Board is to recommend statutory changes to require operators of large venues and events to implement waste reduction, reuse, and recycling plans. Pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 42648.2 (b), these recommendations were to be included in a report to the Legislature by December 1, 2008. Due to the fact that only limited data was going to be available from local jurisdictions by the due date, the CIWMB sought and received an extension from the Legislature to submit the report by July 1, 2009 (requests for extension enclosed).

## I. Legislative Recommendations

The Board has analyzed data from local jurisdictions' Annual Reports for 2005 through 2007. While local agencies have reported some level of large venue and event waste diversion program implementation, it is not possible to determine whether fewer than 75 percent of the large venues and events developed and implemented waste management plans. The primary reasons include: 1) there is no comprehensive list of large venues and events in California, making it difficult to determine the participation rate; and 2) the data

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<sup>1</sup>"Large event" means an event that charges an admission price, or is operated by a local agency, and serves an average of more than 2,000 individuals per day of operation of the event, including, but not limited to, a public, nonprofit, or privately owned park, parking lot, golf course, street system, or other open space when being used for an event, including, but not limited to, a sporting event or a flea market.

"Large venue" means a permanent venue facility that annually seats or serves an average of more than 2,000 individuals within the grounds of the facility per day of operation of the venue facility. For purposes of this chapter, a venue facility includes, but is not limited to, a public, nonprofit, or privately owned or operated stadium, amphitheater, arena, hall, amusement park, conference or civic center, zoo, aquarium, airport, racetrack, horse track, performing arts center, fairground, museum, theater, or other public attraction facility. For purposes of this chapter, a site under common ownership or control that includes more than one large venue that is contiguous with other large venues in the site, is a single large venue.

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provided to the Board is limited because local jurisdictions lack the authority to take enforcement action when a large venue or event fails to report.

While the Board is not able to determine the percentage of the large venues and events implementing waste management programs, the legislation has been beneficial and the program is worth continuing. The Board has developed a set of legislative recommendations based on available data, feedback from stakeholders, and the results of programs that have been successfully implemented (for more details about successful large venue and events programs around the state, see Section III, Accomplishments). For example, this program has increased awareness regarding the benefits and need for large venues and events to develop and implement waste reduction plans.

Additionally, the Board has been able to develop case studies, tools, and peer matching as operators have implemented more venue and event waste reduction programs. Finally, the law has motivated jurisdictions, venue and event operators, and waste management companies/recyclers to discuss waste reduction at these large venues and events. However, with the slowing economy the Board's ability to continue to develop these tools is threatened.

These recommendations are focused on ensuring that the program continues to mature; providing local jurisdictions authority to fully implement the program; making it easier for local jurisdictions to report to the Board; modifying the program to be consistent with the new per capita disposal measurement system (SB 1016, Wiggins, Chapter 343, Statutes of 2008); and ensuring that operators of large venues and events continue and expand their waste diversion programs. Additionally, these recommendations should improve reporting and enhance the ability of local jurisdictions to work with the Board and other local stakeholders to make large venues and events as green as possible.

The five legislative recommendations are:

1. **Remove the sunset on local jurisdiction program reporting for large venues and events:** The reporting requirement for local jurisdictions sunsets with the Board's 2007 Annual Report cycle. Jurisdictions continue to have statutory authority to compile data, charge and collect a fee from large venues/events to offset costs. Therefore, jurisdictions should continue to provide data to the Board as part of their electronic AB 939 Annual Reports. If jurisdictions are required to

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report on these programs, the Board can use this information to help other jurisdictions and large venue/event operators by setting up peer matches and developing model programs. The Board also expects that continuing the mandatory reporting requirement will continue to motivate local jurisdictions and large venues and events to implement this program.

2. **Require large venues and events to implement waste diversion programs:** This recommendation would eliminate a loophole for operators of large venues and events. The current statute requires large venues and events to develop a plan and timeline, but it does not clearly state that they are required to implement their plan. Revising the statute will remove ambiguity regarding program implementation.
3. **Provide local agencies with more specific authority to ensure that large venue and event operators comply with the statute:** Specific authority would allow local jurisdictions to implement enforceable requirements on large venues and events. This authority would allow local jurisdictions to impose administrative civil penalties on large venues and events for not submitting a waste management plan and/or for not implementing their waste management plan. This recommendation would give local jurisdictions the ability to enforce the law, and thus ensure that operators provide timely and accurate information to local agencies. This change would also help to encourage operators of large venues and events to implement effective programs.
4. **Modify the program to be consistent with Senate Bill 1016 disposal reporting:** SB 1016 (Wiggins, Chapter 343, Statutes of 2008) shifted how the CIWMB measures a jurisdiction's diversion efforts, from a diversion-based measurement system to a more accurate, disposal-based, per capita measurement system. Given that the new SB 1016 measurement system primarily focuses on disposal data (rather than diversion data) to determine compliance, the CIWMB recommends, for consistency purposes, that the Large Venue Program be modified to require jurisdictions to provide disposal data for each large venue and event, rather than diversion and disposal data.
5. **Redefine the terms "local agency" and "large event" in existing statute:** The Board recommends adding "regional agencies" (as defined in Public Resources Code Section 40181) to the definition of "local agency" to clarify that regional agencies are required to implement this legislation. This will help to ensure that it is clear that all local jurisdictions, including cities, counties, and regional agencies, are subject to this law. In

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addition, the Board recommends creating a simpler, more inclusive definition of “large event,” to capture all large events. Currently, the definition considers both attendance levels and paid admission. The Board recommends eliminating the paid admission requirement and focusing instead on events with an average attendance of more than 2,000 individuals per day. This is because a 2004 study specified that large events generate similar amounts of waste materials regardless of whether an admission price is charged or not. Additionally, event operators have indicated that tracking events which charge admission prices is very difficult. This change would align the definition of large event with the existing definition of large venue, which does not reference admission price.

## **II. Summary of Data Gathering and Evaluation**

Insufficient data from local jurisdictions, as well as large venue and event operators affected the Board’s ability to determine whether fewer than 75 percent of the large venues and events have developed and implemented waste management plans. There have been a number of problems inherent in jurisdictional reporting of data for large venues and events. For example, even when jurisdictions reported in their Annual Report that a large venue or event took place in 2005 and 2006, often there was no data on diversion or disposal tonnages. This could be due to jurisdictions not understanding the reporting requirements, jurisdictions not requesting the data from venues/events, or the venues/events failing to supply data. (Note: Although statute requires venues/events to provide data to the jurisdiction, there is no enforcement authority granted to local jurisdictions if the large venue or event failed to report.)

Moreover, there is no central repository for information about large venues and events; therefore, no data exists for the Board to determine if less than 75 percent of the large venues and events have implemented their waste management plans. The Board has reviewed the available data submitted by local jurisdictions. A summary of this data analysis follows:

### 2005 Reporting Year:

- For the year, 172 local agencies (out of 420, or 41 percent) reported on 330 venues/events.

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- Of the venues/events that reported disposal and diversion data, the overall diversion rate was 60 percent.

## 2006 Reporting Year:

- For the year, 190 local agencies (out of 415, or 47 percent) reported on 361 venues/events.
- Of the venues/events that reported disposal and diversion data, the overall diversion rate was 66 percent.

## 2007 Reporting Year:

- In 2007, reporting by local agencies and venues/events was significantly better, with 236 local agencies (out of 415, or 57 percent) reporting on 511 venues/events.
- Of the venues/events that reported disposal and diversion data, the overall diversion rate was 69 percent.

Overall, the estimated diversion rate and reporting rate have increased each year, demonstrating that implementation of this statute has had a positive impact on California's large venues and events. While data provided by large venues/events has been somewhat limited, the Board has also been able to use the data to identify model programs, recognize reporting weaknesses, and make recommendations for this report.

### **III. Accomplishments**

This new legislation has resulted in significant successes that can continue to help promote waste reduction at these venues. The following is an overview of these successes, including the Board's technical assistance and tools, city and county model programs, and examples of large venue/event operator activities.

#### ***CIWMB Technical Assistance and Tools***

Board staff was charged with providing outreach, training, identifying model programs, sharing model ordinances, and reporting. The Board developed an extensive [website](#) to reach out to stakeholders. The website contains model programs and case studies from California and programs from other states. The Board provided training to its staff first and then to jurisdictions, recyclers, and venue operators. In particular, the Board coordinated with the California Resource Recovery Association's Venues and Special Events Recycling Council to participate in and conduct training throughout the state. In addition, Board staff worked closely with jurisdictions to compile various tools such as model ordinances, best management practices, etc. Finally, the Board assisted jurisdictions

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with reporting on large venues and events through the electronic annual AB 939 reporting requirements.

## ***Local Agency Model Programs***

A number of cities and counties have implemented successful large venue and event waste reduction programs. For instance, the city of Santa Clarita's Environmental Services Division worked directly with the Art and Events staff to ensure that recycling services were available at all events. Specifically, they updated the event permitting applications to require that all applicants submit written recycling plans for events that have 2,000 or more attendees. In addition, staff worked directly with their commercial waste hauler to ensure that all events had commingled recycling, green waste, and food waste recycling available. The city's hauler provided waste diversion data to city staff following each event. As an example, in 2007, the Cowboy Poetry Festival and the Amgen Tour of California diverted more than 4 tons of recoverable materials as a direct result of Santa Clarita's program.

In 2007, the city of San Diego established a recycling ordinance that mandated commercial, multi-family, single-family, and special event recycling and an environmentally preferable purchasing policy. Additionally, since the inception of AB 2176, San Diego has initiated a number of comprehensive programs/policies/activities to increase diversion at large venues and events. These include:

- Identifying the top 10 percent of large venues in the city;
- Requiring recycling services for all special events that need a permit;
- Providing technical assistance to event operators on waste diversion, and requesting recycling plans;
- Participating in the U.S. EPA Sustainable Food & Beverage roundtable to develop a framework for sustainable food and beverage service criteria for large venues;
- Hosting a large venue recycling workshop with the Del Mar Fairgrounds;
- Conducting a waste characterization study of material from Petco Park to develop a comprehensive recycling plan;
- Upgrading its compost operation to include food waste from military installations and local theme parks, and Petco Park;
- Conducting a food waste compost event in partnership with the San Diego Zoo Wild Animal Park for a National Zookeepers Association Conference;

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- Installing recycling containers decorated with local professional and college team logos in the Qualcomm Stadium parking lot to provide convenient recycling to all event and tailgate participants; and
- Working with Florida-based Royal Caribbean Cruise Line to implement recycling programs on ships visiting San Diego.

The city of Bellflower has, as many other local agencies have, included recycling services for large venues and events in their franchise agreement with their local waste hauler. The franchisee provides roll-off boxes for collecting recyclables at special events. All event roll-off boxes are either sent to recycling facilities or processed at a material recovery facility to recover the recyclables. Bellflower's largest event is its annual car show. The car show's operators were required to have a waste reduction plan, which was implemented in 2007. The city reported a 57 percent diversion rate for that year's event.

The city of Diamond Bar collaborated with its residential waste hauler and the local Conservation Corps to develop a comprehensive recycling plan for large venues and events. The city, the waste hauler, and the local Conservation Corps office must approve all of the city's special events. In fact, the event promoter must provide seven months' notice to allow enough time to prepare a specific waste reduction plan. A month before the event, bins are ordered and stakeholders meet to discuss setup of the event site. Diamond Bar's largest event is its Fourth of July celebration. In 2007, the city diverted 50 percent of the waste materials generated at that holiday event.

The city of Martinez adopted a Large Venue/Event ordinance in January 2008. The city includes a form, titled, "City of Martinez Large Event & Venue Recycling Plan," when city permits are required for any special event. For last year's Earth Day celebration at the John Muir National Historic Site, paper, cans, bottles, and compostables were collected at the event's recycling station. Students from the Alhambra High School Earth Club monitored the recycling station and helped attendees place materials in the correct bins. Cups, plates, and utensils were made from compostable materials. All compostable materials collected were kept onsite and composted by the National Park Service.

## ***Large Venue and Event Operators***

Below are case studies that highlight successful large venue and event waste diversion programs.

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- Airports
  - Sacramento International Airport enhanced its existing internal recycling program as a direct result of AB 2176. In late 2005, a working group met to set goals and expand the program. The goals were to provide recycling opportunities, to make recycling easily accessible to the public, and to have some onsite processing. The new terminal /concourse recycling program was launched on Earth Day 2007 and by July of that year, more than 13 tons of materials had been diverted from landfills.
  - San Francisco International Airport has an impressive waste reduction program. The airport's waste diversion and recycling plan was based on its current waste management contract. The contract mirrors the waste diversion plan and recycling requirements of the city of San Francisco, including but not limited to: recycling and resource conservation; 75 percent waste diversion goal by 2010; zero waste goal by 2020; and the City of San Francisco's composting resolution. SFO submits an Annual Recycling Report to San Francisco Department of the Environment. Recycling tonnage is taken from that report and does not include hazardous waste. Disposal numbers are taken from the Ox Mountain Landfill report. In 2007, the airport diverted more than 124,000 tons of material, which translates to a 93 percent diversion rate.
- Convention Centers/Conferences
  - The Moscone Center in San Francisco made a commitment to environmental responsibility in all operations, with the intent to significantly reduce the facility's waste, use resources efficiently, benefit the local nonprofit community through increased donations, and lower the facility's waste removal costs for clients. Because of these progressive programs, the Moscone Center diverted 440 tons of material from landfills, cut garbage volume in half, and donated 75 tons of recovered goods to local nonprofit organizations. Additionally, through the implementation of waste reduction programs, the Moscone Center cut its garbage disposal costs by more than half.
  - The Governor's Conference on Women and Families is an annual conference held at the Long Beach Convention Center and attended by nearly 12,000 participants each year. Beginning with the 2005 conference, which was

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presented by First Lady Maria Schriver, organizers sought opportunities to improve solid waste diversion from the event. The venue, using city funding and planning support, had already purchased several cardboard balers and cardboard recovery was the centerpiece of the venue's program.

The conference's overall diversion goal was to generate zero waste. Board staff initially introduced a plan for the compost lunch and exhibit recovery. A major aspect of the program was the development of a "Great Taste, Less Waste" box lunch that was pre-planned to include only compostable packaging, serving ware, and food. Materials were collected in compostable bags and taken to a preprocessor where they were ground and mixed with green waste before being transported to a compost facility. In addition, water bottles and other beverage containers were collected, and cardboard, paper, and other materials from the vendor exhibit areas were targeted for recycling. Unrecoverable materials go to a waste-to-energy facility.

As the event has grown, so has the volume of material generated. In 2005, just over nine tons of materials were diverted; the amount doubled to 18 tons for the 2008 conference. After training, venue staff now has the primary role in planning and implementing the program. The city of Long Beach also continues to offer support, provides recycling containers, and hauls away some recyclable materials.

Responding to requests from the city and facility users, the convention center is evaluating options to introduce a comprehensive year-round food recovery program. As a first step, the center already has switched from disposable to compostable serving ware. In 2008, the venue also expanded its collection programs from cardboard to include beverage containers, steel cans, and waste paper.

- Fairs
  - Del Mar Fairgrounds hosts the annual San Diego County Fair and many other events. The fairgrounds' recycling program started in 1985 by recycling office paper. The program has since expanded to include more than 19 different materials, including food discards, beverage containers, and cardboard. The fairgrounds achieved a 91.3 percent diversion rate for its

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solid waste and has set an ultimate goal of "zero waste, or close." For the past few years, the Del Mar Fairgrounds' recycling program has resulted in savings of more than \$1 million annually.

- Festivals
  - The 2008 Indio International Tamale Festival in Indio is a two-day festival featuring tamale and other various food vendors from Southern California. The city of Indio, in collaboration with California Bio-Mass and Burrtec, initiated a "zero-waste" system, which utilized green waste and recycling collection at the event, eliminating the need for a landfill hauling service. To eliminate landfill waste, the city of Indio used a dual receptacle system that included one container for recyclables (bottles, cans, etc.) and another for green waste (paper, cornhusks, and food waste). This program diverted 15.46 tons of organics from the landfill to a compost facility.
  - San Francisco's Bay to Breakers race is billed as the "world's largest footrace" with as many as 100,000 runners in some years. The race dates back to 1911, and is one of the oldest annual footraces in the U.S. The Haight-Ashbury Neighborhood Council Recycling Center works with event staff to ensure water containers are recyclable and that participants are informed about the recycling program. The recycling center generates approximately \$500 per year from the sale of #1 plastic and other containers. Cardboard vendors retain the revenues generated from the sale of the material they collect and market. By diverting recyclables, race organizers eliminate the need for six to eight trash roll-off containers each year. At a cost of \$300 for each roll-off, savings have averaged \$1,800 to \$2,400 each year in trash hauling and disposal costs. Recycling also reduces the labor needed for post-event garbage pickup at "Footstock" in Golden Gate Park's Polo Field and along the racecourse.
- Stadiums
  - The Indian Wells Tennis Center and Garden not only recycles bottles, cans, cardboard, and paper products, it also has one of the state's model food scrap composting programs. Each year, it hosts the largest tennis event in the United States. The small city's population swells from 38,000 to more than 200,000 for the 14-day event, during which more than 58 tons of waste materials are produced. The tennis center has an aggressive program that

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has a goal of collecting 70 percent of post-consumer food scraps and a 90 percent in-kitchen recovery rate. The program has reduced disposal costs by 18 percent. Food scraps are hauled to the California Bio-Mass, Inc. Agricultural Products Production & Research Facility and later returned to the tennis garden as soil amendment for the flowers.

- AT&T Park, home to the San Francisco Giants, seats 42,000 fans, and last season more than 3 million baseball fans attended Giants' home games. One feature that sets this stadium apart from most others is its commitment to comprehensive recycling; water and energy conservation; and an expanded use of biodegradable, recycled-content, and lower toxicity products. Even organic residuals are collected and composted. Last year, the program run by the San Francisco Giants recovered more than 1,760 tons of materials and saved more than \$100,000 in garbage disposal costs.
- Parks and Zoos
  - The Reuben H. Fleet Science Center in San Diego's Balboa Park is open year round, with the number of visitors peaking at more than 2,000 per day during the summer season. The center has taken several environmentally friendly steps to reduce water and energy consumption. The center recycles its e-waste and universal waste (small batteries, fluorescent tubes, and other small light bulbs). Other materials being recycled include office paper, ticket stubs, old metal tables/ stands, outdated brochures, and cardboard collected throughout the building. The center has solar panels on the roof and waterless urinals; each waterless urinal saves 45,000 gallons of water per year. Reusable bags are sold in the gift shop. Staff within the various departments reuse materials such as the old signs, exhibit materials, foam boards, packaging material (popcorn filler, paper, boxes), and pallets. The center has a policy for purchasing recycled-content products and only green cleaning products are used. In 2007, the center diverted approximately 12,740 pounds of solid waste.

## **IV. Conclusion**

In conclusion, by analyzing data from local jurisdictions' Annual Reports for 2005 through 2007, local jurisdictions have reported some level of large venue and event waste diversion

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program implementation, but it is not possible to determine whether fewer than 75 percent of the large venues and events developed and implemented waste management plans. While the Board is not able to determine the percentage of the large venues and events implementing waste management programs, the legislation has been beneficial and the program is worth continuing. Based upon the Board's review of available data, successful results of venue and event waste reduction programs, and feedback from stakeholders, the Board has developed the set of legislative recommendations contained in this report.