



Ms. Teri Wion
California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery
P.O. Box 4025, MS-13A,
Sacramento, CA 95812-4025

December 7, 2011

Subject: Comments on AB 341 Mandatory Commercial Recycling Regulations

Dear Ms Wion,

The City of Sunnyvale appreciates the opportunity to comment on the proposed regulations for AB 341 and supports the increased diversion goals and efforts. In December, 2008, the Sunnyvale City council adopted a zero waste policy. The first step on the path to zero waste was to commission a waste characterization study, which was completed in 2010. Community meetings were held to solicit residential and business input. Following community engagement, a draft zero waste strategic plan to identify and quantify goals was developed and has just been released. Council will select and approve programs to move Sunnyvale toward a zero waste future.

As an important instrument in the zero waste toolbox, the City of Sunnyvale operates the Sunnyvale Materials Recovery and Transfer Station (SMaRT Station®), a \$25 million mixed waste materials recovery facility (MRF) for municipal solid waste (MSW) from the cities of Mountain View, Palo Alto and Sunnyvale. Source separated recyclables and yard trimmings from Sunnyvale and Mountain View residential and multifamily collection programs, as well as residential and commercial municipal solid waste from all three cities, enter the facility for processing. The MRF recovers from the MSW a variety of materials ranging from high value (e.g. beverage containers and cardboard) to low value (concrete, wood, and compostable organics). These recovered materials are sent to recycling markets.

The City of Sunnyvale has a flexible, open market commercial recycling policy, supplemented by City-provided cardboard collection at no charge. Businesses have the option of selecting a private recycling service provider. Many older retail and commercial properties, however, have limited space for placement of additional collection containers. Others are very small generators. Sunnyvale's diverse demographics and dynamic Silicon Valley business environment also

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pose outreach challenges. Materials recovery from the MRF allows businesses that are unable to site containers to comply with the law as it functions as a "safety net" for recovery of recyclables not captured through other programs. Mixed waste processing meets these challenges while simultaneously avoiding the greenhouse gas emissions that would otherwise be produced by adding duplicative, separate collection routes.

Recently completed \$16M upgrades to the SMaRT Station have improved processing capacity so that diversion from the MRF now stands at 19% and is expected to soon reach 25%. Given that much of the solid waste SMaRT receives has already had recyclables removed, these rates of recovery from MSW are quite an achievement.

With the multi-layered approach described above, Sunnyvale's AB 939 diversion rate stands at 67%, well above the mandated 50%, and continues to increase annually. This is unambiguous evidence that a diversion approach based on mixed waste processing can provide compliance with AB 341's commercial recycling requirements.

Thank you for your consideration.

Very truly yours,



Mark Bowers
Solid Waste Program Manager