

Regional Recycling Working Group Meeting

Date: 11/25/2025

Meetings take place the 4th Tuesday of the month from 10 am – 12 pm

Location: Microsoft Teams meeting

Staff Contact: Eric Wolff

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Agenda

1) Introductions

- Anthony Smith, Republic Services
- Arti Lal, CalRecycle
- Caitlin Barboza, HF&F Consultants
- Carolina Lobel, Closed Loop Partners
- Christian Olivas, City of Lemon Grove
- Dana Laosiri, Republic Services
- Daron Warkentin, City of San Diego
- Debbie Descans, WM
- Diana Jamaleddine, City of Solana Beach
- Ellyn Law, County of San Diego
- Emily Schuetz, CalRecycle
- Fernando Moreno, City of Escondido
- Gilberto Verdugo, City of San Diego
- Heather Heckman, City of Santee
- Janine Rodarte, City of Oceanside
- Jenna Roripaugh, WM
- Jennafer Steffen, City of Poway
- Jessica Toth, Solana Center
- Joanne Brasch, CPSC
- Jonathan Lisicki, Superior Chemicals
- Kelly Coyle, Closed Loop Partners
- Kirk Kinder, County of San Diego
- Kristen Dare, WM
- Lotte Phoummavong, Goodwill
- Madeleine Falco, SDSU
- Madeline Lascola-Hutcherson, Goodwill
- Manuel Medrano, City of Chula Vista
- Monica Martinez, City of El Cajon
- Ofelia Andrade, City of Coronado
- Oscar Gittemeier, City of San Diego
- Paul Maechler, City of Encinitas
- Risa Baron, Republic Services
- Serena Lee, City of La Mesa
- Stephen Mergener, Zero Waste
- Steve Weihe, County of San Diego
- Wbaldo Arellano, City of Imperial Beach

2) Transcripts and AI Notetaking – Transcriptions and AI Notetaking are allowed. If you are using such services please be considerate that they are not perfect and confirm with source before quoting anyone.

- 1) Open Forum
 - a) Jessica Toth, Solana Center
 - i) **SB 1383 Updates**
 - (1) Inspections for the calendar year are wrapping up.
 - (2) Focus shifting to annual reporting.
 - (3) All cities working to obtain food donations to meet procurement targets.
 - ii) **Inspector Training Course**
 - (1) Recent course had 30 participants; waitlist formed.
 - (2) 80%+ of participants were from outside the San Diego region.
 - (3) 90% of respondents rated the course highly and would recommend it.
 - (4) Significant improvement noted compared to initial 25% satisfaction rate.
 - iii) **Rain Barrel Program**
 - (1) Rain barrels currently on sale through end of year.
 - (2) Combined rebate + discount = ~70% off.
 - (3) Over 50 rain barrels sold so far.
 - iv) **County Waste Reduction Fee**
 - (1) Forward momentum on increasing the fee.
 - (2) Preliminary definition indicates potential to generate \$3.4M for county jurisdictions for environmental programs.
 - v) **Upcoming Events & Trainings**
 - (1) Tie-Dye Workshop: This Saturday at Solana Center.
 - (2) SB1383 Food Recovery Inspector Training: Begins November 5, 2025 (3 half-day sessions).
 - (3) Community events being offered in advance of SB707 (Responsible Textile Recovery Act).
 - (4) Event listings available: [Events and Education](#).
 - vi) **Other Opportunities**
 - (1) Rochester Institute of Technology offering Sustainable Materials Flow course. Solana Center can assist with discount access.
 - b) Eric Wolff, County of San Diego –
 - i) Promoting Organic Update to support small farms.
 - (1) Easier to move materials
 - (2) Decentralized
 - (3) Revenue stream for farmers
 - ii) Manuel Medrano – For land application, is that vetted and approved?
 - iii) Eric Wolff –
 - (1) Drafting a White Paper on land application of manure
 - (2) Encouraging farmers to compost
 - (3) Looking for leads regarding any farmers interested in accepting manure, food waste grains, and general organics. Send info to Eric Wolff or Jessica Toth.
 - c) Stephen Mergener, Zero Waste San Diego –

- i) Zero Waste Symposium will be held February 18, 2026, early bird registration ends in November.
- d) Paul Maechler, City of Encinitas –
 - i) Is anyone meeting their procurement target for 2025 with Zero Foodprint or energy companies?
 - ii) Eric Wolff –
 - (1) Working with Zero Foodprint.
 - (2) No energy credits.
 - (3) Using some SB1383 dollars to procure compost for farms.
 - (a) Zero Foodprint manages the program, and they monitor the dollars per ton delivered of compost.
 - (4) One other thing we are looking at is waste audits to see if procurement requirements were overestimated by CalRecycle.
 - (a) Jessica Toth – How many on the call are considering doing a waste audit?
 - (b) Eric Wolff – We are looking into that; there are efficiencies that can be gained and complications. Emily can clarify that.
 - (c) Emily Schuetz – Anyone interested in a waste audit can send me an email, we have subject matter experts that handled these audits. In developing a plan, please provide as much information as possible and ask any questions so it is a productive call in the early stages.
 - (d) Manuel Medrano – I would suggest looking into Omnia Partners for contract offerings to piggyback on which is a solutions platform to share contracts.

3) Presentations

- a) Closed Loop Partners – Reused Cities Initiative – Carolina Lobel & Kelly Coyle
 - i) Innovation firm preparing new activations to scale reuse across California.
 - ii) Builds on pilots conducted in multiple U.S. cities (e.g., Denver, Tucson, Petaluma).
- b) Project Leadership & Partners
 - i) Initiative led and managed by the NextGen Consortium.
 - ii) Major participating companies: Wendy's, Yum Brands, PepsiCo, McDonald's, Starbucks, Coca-Cola.
 - iii) First phase of "Reuse Cities" launching in San Diego next year with the goal of making reusable packaging viable at scale.
- c) Pilot Learnings & Focus Areas
 - i) Applying lessons from Petaluma to larger cities.
 - ii) Key focus areas:
 - iii) Increasing return rates.
 - iv) Reducing cost per unit.
 - v) Maintaining strong community engagement.
- d) Engagement & Site Types
 - i) Entities engaged so far include:
 - ii) Office buildings
 - iii) School campuses

- iv) Amusement parks
- v) Events & concert venues
- vi) Transit hubs
- vii) Airports
- viii) Stadiums
- ix) Hospitals
- e) Additional goal: Connect with military bases.
- f) Branding & System Design
 - i) Purple cups selected as the harmonized color.
 - ii) Purple bins will serve as the “fourth bin” specifically for reuse.
- g) Timeline & Local Partnerships
 - i) 2026: Deployment of the program and placement of bins.
 - ii) Partnership with Solana Center to support local engagement and implementation.
- h) Manuel Medrano – Chula Vista is interested in collaborating
 - i) Do you have any agreements in place with large retailers?
 - ii) How are you dealing with schools?
 - (1) County Board of Education might be able to help?
- i) Carolina
 - i) Starbucks is a lead partner and McDonald’s, Coca-Cola and PepsiCo are main founding partners of the consortium.
 - ii) Reuse is more expensive than single use, but it is half the price than it was 2 years ago, there are 2 ways to make it affordable.
 - (1) Be hyper-efficient with operations
 - (2) Creating policy incentives to use less single use packaging. We can connect with the Board of Education.
- j) Jessica Toth
 - i) How do you be able to work with new legislation?
 - (1) Carolina - Launch will happen a couple months before SB54 mandates, to help fulfill reuse refill regulations.
- k) Eric Wolff
 - i) Are the cups made of aluminum or plastic?
 - ii) How much would a franchise have to put up to get the program started?
 - (1) Carolina - Cups are polypropylene plastic. The return rate is 80% so 5 uses on average. The cost varies based on company size, collection amounts, and washing standards, the goal is to get the gap covered with the company investment.
- l) Contacts at NextGen Consortium are carol@closedlooppartners.com; kelly@closedlooppartners.com or write directly to nextgen@closedlooppartners.com

4) CalRecycle Update

1) Monthly SB 1383 Chat with CalRecycle

- a) The most recent SB 1383 Chat with CalRecycle webinar was held on November 19, 2025, from 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM, and focused on large venues and events. The next SB 1383 Chat with CalRecycle is TBD.
- b) All previous SB 1383 Chats were recorded and are available on the Department's [YouTube channel](#)
- c) Join Local Jurisdiction Interested Parties Listserv to be notified: [List Archive Search \(ca.gov\)](#)

2) [CalRecycle Open Grant and Loan Cycles - Funding - CalRecycle Home Page](#)

- a) [Reusable Beverage Containers Infrastructure Grant Program](#) (Cycle 2) i) Application Due Date: **December 4, 2025**
- b) [Increased Recycling of Empty Glass Beverage Containers Grant Program \(Cycle 2\)](#)
 - i) Application Due Date: **December 4, 2025**
- c) [Farm and Ranch Solid Waste Cleanup and Abatement Grant \(Cycle 89\)](#)
 - i) Application Due Date: **January 6, 2026**
- d) [Tire-Derived Aggregate Grant Program \(Cycle 27\)](#) i) Application Due Date: **January 13, 2026**
- e) [Beverage Container Redemption Innovation Grant Program](#) (Dealer Cooperatives)
 - i) Application Due Date: **Continuous through June 30, 2026 (Cycle 5)**
 - f) [Tire Equipment Loan Program](#) i) Application Due Date: **Continuous**
 - g) [Beverage Container Recycling Loan Program](#) i) Application Due Date: **Continuous**
 - h) [Greenhouse Gas Reduction Loan Program](#) i) Application Due Date: **Continuous**
 - i) [Recycling Market Development Zone Loan Program](#)
 - i) Application Due Date: **Continuous**

3) [Next Monthly Public Meeting](#)

- a) December 16, 2025
- i) <https://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/PublicMeeting/>

- 5) NSAC & CPSC Updates – Legislative contacts not in attendance, no updates provided for this meeting
- 6) Wasting Fee Update – Stephen Mergener
 - a) Finalizing the language with the Sierra Club.
 - b) Jessica Toth - What will the funding be used for?
 - c) Eric Wolff – Countywide activities that would not make sense for individual jurisdictions to implement alone would be the appropriate type of programs.
- 7) SB 1383 Roundtable
 - a) Eric Wolff – Opening the floor.
 - b) Emily Schuetz – My new supervisor, Arti Lal just joined. She is at a senior level with CalRecycle and has been working with schools and is a lovely person.
 - c) Arti Lal – This is my first Recycling Working Group meeting so I'm excited to see what you all do.
 - d) Eric Wolff – Anything new with CRRA conference planning?
 - e) Manuel Medrano – We just had a board meeting. Some discussion on tours and will be following up with the group on forming a local committee for CRRA functions. Would like you all to keep good notes on your programs which we want to showcase the great things we are doing in San Diego.
 - f) Stephen Mergener – There is \$0.25 redemption for boxed wine and recyclers I spoke with say they are not recyclable.
 - i) Eric Wolff - They are mixed material, but the box can be recycled.

- ii) Manuel Medrano replied, a couple of facilities in the Sacramento area are making building materials from it. They can give a presentation for more insight.

8) Other Regional Working Group Reports

- a) Edible Food Working Group –
 - i) Annual food recovery organization site visits will start in December through January
 - ii) December EFR meeting is cancelled
 - iii) Next meeting is January 27, 2026.
 - iv) Michael Wonsidler – Organics Working Group – Not in attendance this meeting.

Adjournment – Next meeting 1/27/2026