

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

County of San Diego

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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 Jamaledine, 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 will 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** j
- 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