



Date: July 24, 2019

TO: Waste Management Authority Board

FROM: Wendy Sommer, Executive Director

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SUBJECT: Countywide Integrated Waste Management Plan (CoIWMP) Update

SUMMARY

The CoIWMP is the guiding document for solid waste infrastructure and countywide programs and policies. Our CoIWMP was first adopted in 1997 and the field of waste management has changed significantly since then. While several updates and amendments have been made over the years to specific sections and to update or add facilities, it is time to review the document as a whole to ensure relevancy and consistency.

At the July 25 WMA meeting, staff will summarize the changing landscape of the field and current priorities of the agency, and recommend that the Board authorize staff to conduct an update and reorganization of the CoIWMP.

DISCUSSION

When the elements of the CoIWMP were first mandated by State law in 1989 (AB939), the focus was to describe local waste management conditions and lay out policies and implementation plans to achieve waste diversion goals (50% by year 2000). In the past 30 years, the State has introduced new laws, the WMA has adopted key ordinances, local jurisdictions have exceeded diversion goals, markets have changed, technology has advanced, and we have improved our understanding of how people form good waste reduction habits. While subsequent CoIWMP amendments have captured some of these changes, it is useful to look holistically at evolving conditions that warrant a systemic update of perspective and approach to materials management.

The section below presents a summary of significant changes in 30 years through a “then and now” framework to capture the shifts in the material and waste sector that have occurred over a generation. “Then” refers generally to the time between 1990 to 1995 and “now” generally refers to the years since 2010.

	Then	Now
Waste Facilities	Prior to and around 1989, small landfills lined the San Francisco Bay, with each city operating a local landfill. There was a high degree of local control, along with increased potential for leakage into the Bay and surrounding areas. There was no industrial-scale compost facility in Alameda County.	The smaller facilities close to the Bay have closed, and two large privately-owned regional landfills have replaced them. There are now two compost facilities, one of which accepts commercial and residential food scraps. The local jurisdictions continue to be responsible for franchise agreements and contracts individually and there is no regional control over them.
Landfill Capacity	The focus was on ensuring that there was enough landfill capacity for local waste at reasonable rates. The WMA chose to acquire land as a contingency to ensure that there would be publicly owned landfill capacity if needed.	As Alameda County's population has grown and land has become scarce, the land use and environmental approval processes for new landfills have become more stringent. New landfills are restricted to a 15-year capacity. With an increasing WMA focus on upstream issues and the increase in diversion rates, the agency is exploring using its reserve lands for carbon farming in addition to maintaining wind energy and conservation easements, none of which preclude future development of a landfill.
Facility Siting and Development Review	As new landfills, transfer stations, and other facilities are developed, the WMA is the key agency considering solid waste policy, protecting local landfill capacity, and related environmental policies.	With increased environmental awareness, more detailed environmental review procedures and more specific state and local regulatory requirements, lead agencies play an increasing role in addressing solid waste policy issues in connection with new facilities.
Markets for Recyclables	Recycling markets were reliable. From the 1950s to the 1970s, only a small amount of plastic was produced, so plastic waste was relatively manageable. By the 1990s, plastic waste generation had more than tripled in two decades, following a similar rise in plastic production.	The United States increasingly relied on China as an export destination for mixed paper (junk mail, newsprint etc.) and mixed plastic. Due to concerns about contamination of the material they have been receiving, and in order to shut down older polluting mills, China instituted policies (Blue Sky and National Sword) that have effectively closed the doors on most imported mixed recyclables. Global changes are abruptly

		<p>affecting our local programs.</p> <p>In the early 2000s, our output of plastic waste rose more in a single decade than it had in the previous 40 years. Today, we produce about 300 million tons of plastic waste every year globally, nearly equivalent to the weight of the entire human population.</p>
Innovation in Packaging	<p>The composition of packaging was simpler and easier to understand. Curbside recycling initially had a limited number of accepted materials that required separate containers placed at residential curbsides.</p>	<p>A proliferation of multi-material single-use packaging and food service ware, while convenient to use, are difficult to recycle and have become major contributors to litter and ocean pollution. It also adds to the complexity of sorting materials, contaminating source-separated material streams, and contributing to added toxicity.</p> <p>In a desire to increase recycling volumes, communities began to shift to “single-stream” recycling where different types of materials were comingled in one cart. The shift led to more materials being accepted for recycling and ever higher recycling volumes, but lower quality feedstocks from material cross-contamination.</p>
Waste Management Philosophy	<p>The discard management philosophy focused on how to best deal with waste once it was created, and included a set of options: reuse, recycle, compost, and landfill. A primary focus in the initial years was to count diversion rates.</p>	<p>The materials management approach includes waste prevention and discard management, while seeking to reduce overall environmental impacts by managing materials through all stages of their life – from raw material extraction to product design and manufacture, transport, consumption, use, reuse, recycling and disposal.</p>
Climate Protection	<p>A generation ago, Californians embraced a recycling ethic based on the desire to reduce litter, conserve natural resources, and cut our reliance on landfills. There was very little public awareness of climate change.</p>	<p>By 2013, Alameda County became one of the first counties in which every jurisdiction has an adopted climate action plan (CAP) or strategy. The CAPs have become the guiding environmental document for most jurisdictions, including a section on waste management, to reduce the methane emissions caused by discarding materials in landfills. In 2006, the State passed AB</p>

		32 - The Global Warming Solutions Act, and subsequently SB 1383, the Short-Lived Climate Pollutants Act in 2016, that includes diverting materials (in particular organics) from landfill as a climate protection strategy.
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CoIWMP Update 2019

The current CoIWMP document has had updates and amendments over the last thirty years, with the most significant updates in 2010 when changes were made to the document to align the goals included in the Strategic Plan. In addition, CalRecycle requires a review every five years, and the WMA has done several 5-year reviews with the latest review completed in November 2018, although the review’s primary focus was to confirm remaining landfill capacity.

The current update to the CoIWMP, while fulfilling all legal requirements, will also include updates reflecting new State requirements, goals and policies that reflect current agency priorities, eliminating redundancies/inconsistencies, updates to facts/data, and clarifications/streamlining of the conformance finding process to focus on what is legally required.

The CoIWMP update will be reviewed by the Recycling Board (acting as the Local Task Force) on September 12. The first public hearing with the WMA is scheduled for September 25 with formal adoption set October 23.

RECOMMENDATION

That the WMA Board direct staff to update the CoIWMP.