



DATE: December 8, 2016

TO: Programs & Administration Committee

FROM: Tom Padia, Deputy Executive Director

BY: Judi Ettliger, Senior Program Manager

SUBJECT: Fremont Food Scrap Composting Pilot Results

SUMMARY

StopWaste partnered with City of Fremont Environmental Services staff in June, 2016 to test the impact of outreach methods targeting residential food scrap composting behavior. Three specific treatments were deployed and measured over an eight week period. At the December 8 Programs & Administration Committee meeting, staff will share the pilot project results.

DISCUSSION

In the summer of 2016, StopWaste conducted a pilot program in Fremont to determine the most effective way to encourage residents to place all of their compostable material, specifically food scraps, in their green bin instead of the trash. Fremont was selected as the pilot city for the large amount of compostables in the trash identified in bin audits. Additionally, the hauler, Republic, allows for compostable plastic bags in the green bin, which was a component of one pilot treatment.

Three outreach conditions were created based on previous research into the barriers and benefits of green bin recycling: the use of countertop pails (and compostable plastic pail liners) to collect food scraps, “hangtag” outreach materials placed directly on garbage bins, and home composting reports directly mailed to residents. The conditions were designed to go beyond providing knowledge of how to participate and specifically included social science strategies to motivate behavior change.

Post-treatment audits of randomly selected trash bins showed a significant decrease in the amount of compostables across all three treatment groups while the control group showed an increase of food scraps in the trash. Staff will use the results to inform future residential food scrap recycling outreach.

RECOMMENDATION

This item is for information only.