



**DATE:** February 9, 2017

**TO:** Programs & Administration Committee

**FROM:** Pat Cabrera, Administrative Services Director

**BY:** Teresa Eade, Senior Program Manager

**SUBJECT:** Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance Update

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### **SUMMARY**

The state mandates that local land-use agencies implement the model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance (WELO) for new landscape construction that triggers a building permit. Recent updates to WELO include new requirements for compost and recycled mulch. At the February 9 Programs & Administration committee meeting, staff will present opportunities to leverage WELO implementation to expand local and recycled compost and mulch markets. Input from Board members will be used to set priorities for assisting member agencies with WELO implementation.

### **DISCUSSION**

The WELO sets water budgets for new landscapes and requirements for irrigation, site soil conditions and more. A version of WELO has been in effect since 1990 and has been most recently updated by Executive Order of the Governor.

The newest version of this model ordinance has the lowest water budget to date, greatly restricting the use of lawn especially for decorative use. It now requires compost for certain applications and increased levels of mulch. For the first time the ordinance states that post-consumer recycled organic mulches shall take precedent over inorganic materials or virgin forest product mulches.

These new inclusions of compost and mulch have a great potential for increasing water savings, carbon sequestration and demand for recycled organic products. However, statewide WELO implementation has been uneven or poor. The state has tried to address this by now having WELO enforced and updated through the California Building Standards Commission and integrated into CALGreen code and by requiring annual reporting.

StopWaste staff has reached out to member agency staff to assess the need for WELO implementation help and have found that most would welcome additional support and tools. The

presentation will review benefits of the new organics requirements in WELO, the requirements and barriers to implementation and discuss potential solutions.

**RECOMMENDATION**

This item is for information only.