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**DATE:** February 13, 2020  
**TO:** Planning Committee/Recycling Board  
**FROM:** Meri Soll, Senior Program Manager  
**SUBJECT:** Reuse Grant Update – Ecology Center/Vessel Cups

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### **SUMMARY**

Last fiscal year StopWaste provided grant awards totaling \$275,000 to twenty entities focused on reuse, repair, deconstruction, and redistribution of goods. One of the grant recipients, The Ecology Center, was awarded \$50,000 to pilot test the Vessel returnable cup system at cafes in Berkeley. At the February Planning Committee/Recycling Board meeting, staff from the Ecology Center and Vessel will provide an update on grant activities and deliverables.

### **DISCUSSION**

For the past 10 years, StopWaste has offered Reuse Operating Grants to provide operational funding for nonprofit reuse entities in Alameda County. In recent years, to align with our adopted guiding principles that prioritize waste-reduction “upstream” activities, we have expanded grant funding to both nonprofits and businesses to increase reuse infrastructure and services in Alameda County.

The Ecology Center is a Berkeley based 501(c)(3) nonprofit that aspires to transform the ideals of sustainability into everyday practice. The recent \$50,000 grant award to the Ecology Center is to pilot test the Vessel returnable reusable cup service ([www.vesselworks.org](http://www.vesselworks.org)), and assist in the development of a model program that could be replicated elsewhere. The goal of the pilot project is to initiate and normalize the use of reusable food ware, test customer and business acceptance, develop a successful business model, and learn for future expansions. Additional long term goals are to further reduce single-use disposable food ware and create a model for city-wide and regional adoption.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

This item is for information only.