

Recycling Programs in Santa Cruz County

Synopsis

The many recycling programs within Santa Cruz County are managed by public, profit-making and non-profit organizations. Several of these were investigated by the Grand Jury to see if improvements could be made in areas of public awareness, efficiency and consolidation. A review of these programs indicated that through creative methods, landfills in the county were within state guidelines of 50 percent for solid waste reduction by 2000.

Background

In 1989, California state legislators recognized that landfill capacities were in a crisis. As a result, recycling of virtually all materials had become more critical to preserving the quality of the environment. The policy of “reduce, reuse, recycle,” environmentally sound land filling and transformation became the desired approach to solid waste management.¹

Recycling became a serious subject for California cities and counties as well as the public with the passage in 1989 of Assembly Bill 939. The passage of this bill established the following:

- The current organization, structure and mission of the California Integrated Waste Management Board (CIWMB).
- Mandates that all cities and counties reduce the amount of waste entering their landfills by 25 percent in 1995 and by 50 percent in 2000. This is referred to as the waste diversion rate.²
- An integrated framework for program implementation, solid waste planning and solid waste facility and landfill compliance.
- Encouragement of resource conservation.
- Consideration of the long-term effects of waste management operations.

Local governments, through CIWMB regulatory oversight, implement the diversion goals and program compliance. This is accomplished by monitoring landfill utilization through a disposal based reporting system.³

¹ CIWMB 21st Century Policy Project.

² California Assembly Bill 939.

³ CIWMB 21st Century Policy Project.

2003 – 2004 Santa Cruz County Grand Jury Final Report and Responses

Since the passage of AB 939 in 1989, California landfill capacity has increased. Although capacity is currently not considered the statewide crisis it once was, there are still problems regionally.

Recycling does not come without a price. The CIWMB 21st Century Policy Project was concerned that maintaining the year 2000 goals of AB 939 could be very difficult for some of the cities and counties within the state. However, as a result of the passage of AB 939 significant progress was achieved in:

- Waste diversion.
- Program implementation.
- Solid waste planning.
- Protection of public health and safety and the environment through the improved operation of landfills and solid waste facilities.

An important aspect in the surge of involvement with recycling continues to be public awareness. Each of the recycling facilities visited by the Grand Jury recognizes the need to publicize its activities. Many forms of literature are distributed throughout the county in both English and Spanish. The public awareness of recycling is an ongoing challenge considering the volume of advertising inundating our society. As with any message aimed at the public, success depends on its being remembered, which is a result of attention-getting creativity. Promotional information on recycling takes a variety of forms, such as:

- School programs.
- Bill inserts.
- Flyers.
- Pamphlets.
- Stickers.
- Television public service messages.
- Posters on collection trucks.

Separate messages target specific items such as household batteries, motor oil and computer printer cartridges. Public awareness is an investment in recycling efforts that can pay off with increased public participation.

Scope

This investigation examines the operations of the various organizations and agencies in the county involved in recycling. Outreach programs to increase public awareness are also looked at for each of the groups. The organizations include:

- County of Santa Cruz Department of Public Works.

- City of Santa Cruz Public Works Department.
- City of Watsonville Department of Public Works.
- Valley Women’s Club (of San Lorenzo Valley).
- California Grey Bears, Inc.
- Waste Management, Inc. of Santa Cruz County.
- Ecology Action, Inc.

Sources

Interviewed:

Santa Cruz County Officials.
Santa Cruz City Officials.
Watsonville City Officials.
Santa Cruz County recycling organizations.
Santa Cruz County landfill organizations.

Reviewed:

Nevada County Grand Jury 2002-2003 Report
California Integrated Waste Management Board 21st Century Policy Project,
www.ciwmb.ca.gov/2000Plus/Events/FutureMar99/issues1.htm.
Recycling Today, Enforcement of Commercial Recycling, www.recyclingtoday.com
Darryl Young, Director of the California Department of Conservation,
KGO radio interview May 27, 2004.
Richard Anthony, California Resource Recovery Association Board member, cited in
Mandatory Summary, www.greenyesgrn.org/1997/0206.html.

Findings

Information in findings 1 - 26 is taken from interviews with various local recycling and landfill organizations.

1. County landfills are reaching maximum capacity, requiring that new sites be identified, licensed and built.

Response: Santa Cruz City Council AGREES.

Response: Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors AGREES.

The County and the cities of Santa Cruz, Watsonville, Scotts Valley and Capitola have been jointly conducting a solid waste facilities siting study for the last three and a half years under the umbrella of the Integrated Waste Management Local Task Force. The purpose of this study is to locate potential sites for new landfills,

transfer stations and other waste management facilities to replace our aging landfills.

Response: City of Watsonville AGREES.

The City of Watsonville's landfill has a remaining capacity of approximately 15 years.

2. It takes approximately ten years to get a permit for a new landfill.

Response: Santa Cruz City Council DISAGREES.

Permitting time is now exceeding fifteen years in many cases.

Response: Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors AGREES.

Response: City of Watsonville AGREES.

3. The average lifespan of California landfills is about 15 years.

Response: Santa Cruz City Council DISAGREES.

The California Integrated Waste Management Board (CIWMB) Disposal Site database shows that most active landfills have significantly more than fifteen years life. Around 1992, when Federal Regulation "Subtitle D" came into effect, many smaller landfills could not reach compliance and closed. This resulted in fewer landfills, but left larger ones with more capacity and longer site life.

Response: Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors NEITHER AGREES NOR DISAGREES.

County staff contacted the California Integrated Waste Management Board to determine the accuracy of this finding, and CIWMB was unable to provide us with the average life of all California landfills.

Response: City of Watsonville NEITHER AGREES NOR DISAGREES.

The City of Watsonville has no data regarding average lifespans of California landfills.

4. The remaining lifespan for the City of Santa Cruz's landfill (Dimeo Lane) is about 34 years, if carefully used.

Response: Santa Cruz City Council AGREES.

5. The remaining lifespan of the Santa Cruz County landfill (Buena Vista) is about 15 years.

Response: Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors AGREES.

6. Santa Cruz County Code 7.20.110 states that garbage can be held no longer than seven days.

Response: Santa Cruz City Council PARTIALLY AGREES.

The actual language states, “Garbage containers on all premises shall be emptied and garbage shall be collected and properly disposed of not less than once a week.”

Response: Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors AGREES.

Response: City of Watsonville NEITHER AGREES NOR DISAGREES.

The City of Watsonville has no data regarding average lifespans of California landfills.

7. The county contracts with a private company for its garbage and recycling pickup.

Response: Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors AGREES.

8. The cities of Santa Cruz and Watsonville provide their own garbage and recycling trucks and pickup.

Response: Santa Cruz City Council AGREES.

Response: City of Watsonville AGREES.

9. Currently the county has no mandatory garbage or recycling service in the unincorporated areas. Garbage pickup is mandatory in all four of the county’s incorporated areas. Separate garbage and recycling containers are distributed in the cities of Capitola, Santa Cruz, Scotts Valley and Watsonville. Using the recycling containers is optional.

Response: Santa Cruz City Council AGREES.

Response: Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors PARTIALLY DISAGREES.

Unincorporated county residents who elect to use the franchised collection services offered by Waste Management also receive garbage, recycling and yardwaste

containers. Unincorporated County residents may also elect to subscribe to lower cost recycling and/or yardwaste collection service. This “recycle only” service is intended to support those county residents who strive to generate little or no refuse.

Response: City of Watsonville AGREES.

Agree as to facts relating to the City of Watsonville.

10. Approximately 65 percent of residents in the unincorporated areas of the county use garbage and recycling curbside pickup.

Response: Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors AGREES.

11. Approximately 55 percent of San Lorenzo Valley residents use curbside pickup.

Response: Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors AGREES.

12. Mandatory garbage and recycling pickup in the unincorporated area of the county could result in less illegal dumping and a reduced amount of recyclable materials in the landfill, some officials said.

Response: Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors AGREES.

13. If all recyclable materials were recycled, officials say that the Buena Vista landfill could have at least a 30 percent additional reduction in material.

Response: Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors AGREES.

14. Some recycling officials said that Buena Vista landfill workers need a better understanding of California’s recycling laws (AB 939 and the appropriate California Public Resources Code sections) in order to inform customers who arrive at the landfill with recyclable materials.

Response: Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors DISAGREES.

Regular staff meetings are held with all landfill and transfer station staff involved with the public to review and discuss recycling policies, diversion programs and implementation of AB 939 mandated programs. Numerous flyers and informational brochures are produced and distributed by landfill and transfer station staff explaining in greater detail about the various recycling and waste diversion programs available to the public. All landfill and transfer station managers and supervisors are regularly sent to seminars conducted by peer professional organizations in the solid waste and recycling field to keep them up-to-date on the most current regulations, operational practices and recycling programs. This information is regularly disseminated to all operational staff. Most landfill and

transfer station supervisors and managers have received operational certification through our professional peer organization, which requires very specific knowledge of recycling and waste diversion practices, policies and regulations. Administrative staff responsible for public education regularly provides direct outreach to public users of our facilities, both at the facilities and through direct outreach conducted at businesses and residences.

15. Some people think recycling is free but because of the expenses involved it is not. Volume is the key to making a profit in recycling: the greater the volume, the greater the profit.

Response: Santa Cruz City Council PARTIALLY AGREES.

We agree that recycling is not free. If you lose a nickel per unit on each item manufactured, selling more units will not recoup that loss. Volume has less to do with profit than market price. Volume helps if one is focused on one material type and the market price is reasonable. However, municipalities collect several items as a public service, not as a profit-making venture. The cost of all those items affect the bottom line, and the City does not just stop collecting unprofitable items, as a for-profit private recycler could do.

Response: Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors PARTIALLY DISAGREES.

Recycling is not free, but it typically has a much lower cost than disposal. Revenues generated through sales of recyclable materials do not typically cover the expense associated with collection, sorting and marketing of these materials. While increased volume of some material may also increase revenues, some recyclable materials have very low market values and can have a detrimental effect on overall recycling revenues. Overall, recycling markets have been at an all time low for the last three years and no profits are being made at this time. The County has asked the state legislature to consider mandating more recycled material content in consumer products to increase this market.

Response: City of Watsonville PARTIALLY AGREES.

The economics of recycling depend on more than just volume. Other factors such as collection and processing efficiency, material prices, etc. affect recycling economics.

16. The City of Santa Cruz routinely uses the same customers for its sale of recyclable materials. The City of Watsonville aggressively negotiates with brokers using high dollar items (white paper and cardboard) to obtain the best price.

Response: Santa Cruz City Council PARTIALLY AGREES.

Although the City of Santa Cruz often uses the same buyers, the Recycling Center Supervisor shops around for the best market price. Using this best price, he is often able to leverage the usual buyers into matching the best currently offered price. Having long-term relationships with buyers can also help ensure that during the low-market periods, the buyers will still accept our materials and give us their best price given low demand.

Response: City of Watsonville AGREES.

Agree as to the facts relating to Watsonville.

17. Each recycling entity that collects materials usually makes its own arrangements to sell its products to companies outside of the county.

Response: Santa Cruz City Council AGREES.

Response: Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors AGREES.

Response: City of Watsonville PARTIALLY AGREES.

Agree as to facts as they relate to Watsonville. However, Watsonville has also sold products to companies within Santa Cruz County.

18. The County of Santa Cruz's Ben Lomond Transfer Station has a limited area to collect recycling materials.

Response: Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors PARTIALLY DISAGREES.

The Ben Lomond Transfer Station has adequate area to collect all the basic materials collected through the curbside collection program as well as self-hauled woodwaste, yardwaste, mattresses, tires, household hazardous waste and electronic waste. However, due to limits on large open areas for processing, the transfer station is not able to store large volumes of scrap metal for on-site processing. This forces the County to haul small loads to end markets which reduces the net revenues because of the increased cost of transportation.

The Ben Lomond Transfer Station also lacks adequate large open space for collection and processing of concrete and asphalt materials. These items are directed to the Buena Vista Site for processing.

19. Interactions among various coordinators of the various recycling organizations within the county are informal.

Response: Santa Cruz City Council PARTIALLY AGREES.

We agree that there is no formal system in place for recycling coordinators within the County to communicate on marketing of recyclable materials. However, there are several State and national organizations that all County entities belong to, including the National Recycling Coalition and the California Resource Recovery Association. Additionally, State legislation mandates a committee, the Local Task Force and Technical Advisory Committee, that is tasked to review and act on solid waste and recycling issues within the County. All County agencies have membership on this committee and most private and non-profit agencies are also members. Our City of Santa Cruz Waste Reduction Coordinator, who works with outreach and education issues, does work with other County agency peers, in both formal and informal settings.

Response: Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors PARTIALLY DISAGREES.

While some interactions are informal, there are also formal forums for staff and public discussion of regional recycling issues. The Integrated Waste Management Local Task Force is a formal organization composed of elected officials and their representatives from each of the county and city jurisdictions. The purpose of this task force is to address regional, countywide waste management and recycling issues common to all participating members. The Task Force conducts all its meetings in the public forum.

The County and the Cities of Capitola, Watsonville and Scotts Valley are all members of the Central Coast Recycling Media Coalition (CCRMC), which also includes county and city representatives from Monterey and San Benito counties. The CCRMC was formed under a Memorandum of Understanding between all the participating agencies and each agency provides funding to the CCRMC for public education. The CCRMC works specifically on joint public outreach efforts for recycling and litter reduction across the tri-county region.

The County and the cities of Scotts Valley and Capitola are jointly funding resource conservation education in the public schools. This successful program provides information on recycling and resource conservation as part of the classroom curriculum and provides the necessary recycling infrastructure to support school recycling and waste diversion activities. This very successful program has received statewide awards and is supported by the County Office of Education.

Response: City of Watsonville AGREES.

20. Some recycling officials are concerned about the idea of consolidation recycling activities that involve information and public awareness. They feel the money might not be wisely spent.

Response: Santa Cruz City Council AGREES.

Response: Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors PARTIALLY DISAGREES.

The County understands that other jurisdictions have taken this position on certain programs and as such have refused to participate or have dropped out of participating in some multi-jurisdictional recycling or public awareness programs. However, the County has and continues to promote joint efforts to address recycling, waste management and public education efforts as evidenced by our continued participation in those joint programs outlined in our response to finding 19 above. The County believes that joint efforts in this area help create programs that are consistent across the entire county, improve public understanding, and can be more cost effective than individual jurisdictional efforts aimed at the same goal.

All of the existing multi-jurisdictional programs have processes to involve each entity in the fiscal decisions of the programs. The level of involvement in program financing and budgeting decisions has always been left up to each participating jurisdiction.

Response: City of Watsonville PARTIALLY AGREES.

The City of Watsonville has such concerns in cases where individual programs differ significantly.

21. The City of Santa Cruz has won awards for its public recycling information.

Response: Santa Cruz City Council AGREES.

22. The county's informational materials on recycling were criticized as poor and unimaginative.

Response: Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors DISAGREES.

The County's public education program is very comprehensive and uses all forms of media to reach the intended audiences. The County has produced directly and indirectly through contract a wide variety of public information items including brochures, TV commercials, radio ads, internet information, hot lines and regular business and residential newsletters. The County has received numerous awards for educational activities such as three "Trash Cutter" awards from the California Integrated Waste Management Board for the 1) Best Public Information Program,

2) Best Schools Program, and 3) Best Creative Partnerships Program. The latter award is in recognition of our efforts to partner with local non-profit agencies for development and implementation of educational outreach for a wide variety of recycling and waste diversion programs.

The County has also received an award from the California Resource Recovery Association for “Innovations In Government” in recognition of our Public Schools Resource Conservation Program.

The County employs a full-time Public Education Coordinator to oversee all educational activities. By conducting most of our educational efforts with in-house staff or local non-profit agencies, the County is able to provide these services more cost effectively than by using more expensive outside consulting services. As an example, the County directly contracts with local TV stations for production of commercials instead of using an intermediary consultant. The stations produce the commercials with their own professional advertising staff and the County provides editorial direction. This results in professionally produced commercials without the added overhead cost of a consultant, which allows the use of more educational funding for airtime.

23. Some recycling groups in the county believe they do not get adequate exposure to inform the public of proper recycling procedures and the availability of local resources.

Response: Santa Cruz City Council PARTIALLY AGREES.

There is a wealth of advertising and public outreach in this County. Informing the public about recycling is not easy due to differences in programs and the marketability of some products, such as plastics marked as recyclable even though no practical market exists.

Response: Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors DISAGREES.

The County has funded and worked with a local non-profit, Ecology Action, for over 15 years to produce the only comprehensive guides available for local recycling opportunities. The County produces, regularly updates, and distributes two guides: the “Where to Recycle Guide” for residential customers and the “Business Recycling Guide” for local businesses. Four newsletters are sent each year to unincorporated County residents, two to residential customers and two to all County businesses focusing on business recycling issues. These newsletters contain information and articles on the latest recycling services, changes in local and state regulations, and other current waste management issues. The County’s refuse and recycling collection franchisee, Waste Management, also produces informational brochures for their residential and commercial customers that list alternative recycling resources in the county. The County also maintains a

2003 – 2004 Santa Cruz County Grand Jury
Final Report and Responses

recycling “hotline” with up-to-date local information on recycling opportunities throughout the entire County.

The County also provides significant funding and outreach support to two local non-profit recyclers, the California Grey Bears and the Valley Women’s Club.

The County also employs a full time Commercial Waste Reduction Coordinator who works directly with businesses to reduce wastes. The role of this position is to assist and coordinate recycling and waste diversion service between the businesses and the various local recycling service providers. We actively promote all the known recycling service providers in the county.

Response: City of Watsonville AGREES.

24. Ecology Action is a Santa Cruz based non-profit informational organization that uses grants from federal, state and county governments to promote recycling. Ecology Action works with the county on some recycling projects.

Response: Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors AGREES.

25. Some cities and counties get state and federal grants to run special recycling programs. Examples are programs to recycle motor oil and batteries.

Response: Santa Cruz City Council PARTIALLY AGREES.

Some funding is available to assist in funding programs such as motor oil collection, however, the entire cost of the programs typically are not covered (with the exception of initial funding for innovative pilot projects).

Response: Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors AGREES.

The County agrees with this finding but is not aware of any federal or state grants available for recycling batteries.

Response: City of Watsonville AGREES.

26. As of 2003, 22 of the 58 counties in California have met the 50 percent solid waste diversion requirement specified by AB 939.⁴ In 2001, Santa Cruz County had a 53 percent diversion rate.

Response: Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors AGREES.

⁴ Nevada County Grand Jury Report 2002-03.

27. Each day 2.5 million glass bottles are discarded in landfills in California. Commercial customers, such as restaurants and apartment complexes, are large users and therefore large contributors to the problem in California.

Response: Santa Cruz City Council PARTIALLY AGREES.

The last full statewide waste characterization study available from the CIWMB was done in 1999. It estimates that about 2.8% of the waste stream is glass, or about 1.07 million tons (although this figure includes non-recyclable glass). It is not clear to us that there is a logical basis for the assumption that commercial customers send a larger proportional share of glass to the landfill rather than recycling it. Many of the restaurants and apartment complexes in the City of Santa Cruz do participate in glass recycling. In our 1998 City landfill disposal characterization study, the commercial samples showed 2% glass bottles and containers, and the residential samples 2.1%. (It would be useful if the Grand Jury cited the source of their statistics.)

Response: Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors PARTIALLY DISAGREES.

This is a very generalized statement. In the unincorporated County, we have very good participation in bottle recycling both at businesses and apartment complexes. Our Business Waste Reduction Coordinator also works with a network of dedicated recycling advocates at most apartment complexes to disseminate recycling information, track waste diversion progress and expand recycling services.

Response: City of Watsonville NEITHER AGREES NOR DISAGREES.

The City of Watsonville has no statewide data of this nature.

28. Several communities across the U.S. have adopted programs of mandatory recycling with excellent results. (This does not include mandatory garbage pick-up). An example is San Diego where mandatory separation saw participation jump from 30-40% up to 80-90%. They used a coordinated approach of public awareness, slogans, media press releases, press conferences and special events to enlist public understanding of the advantages of recycling.

Response: Santa Cruz City Council DISAGREES.

While some cities in the nation may have mandatory recycling, the City of San Diego is not one of them. The reference may refer to that program changing from source-separated recycling collection to its new single-stream collection. A major program change would include all those outreach aspects. With the current levels of voluntary participation, most communities see little need to move to mandatory recycling. There is no proof that mandatory recycling would increase recycling

levels by the amounts indicated. There are also additional questions about how enforcement can be done and the increased program cost to fund enforcement.

Response: Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors AGREES.

Response: City of Watsonville NEITHER AGREES NOR DISAGREES.

The City of Watsonville has not confirmed the features and performance of such programs in other jurisdictions.

29. The key element of mandatory recycling is to make participation “convenient.”

Response: Santa Cruz City Council PARTIALLY AGREES.

Convenience is a key component to the success of all recycling programs, but may not be the most important factor to the success of mandatory recycling.

Response: Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors AGREES.

Response: City of Watsonville AGREES.

The City of Watsonville believes that convenience is a key factor in voluntary programs as well.

30. Other communities have seen increased cooperation by use of economic incentives along with comprehensive education and promotion activities. Although the word “mandatory” initially raises concerns, communities have found little need for it. With convenient home and commercial pick up service, plus vigorous inspection at the landfill entrance for drive up loads, people are more inclined to recycle willingly.

Response: Santa Cruz City Council AGREES.

Response: Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors AGREES.

Response: City of Watsonville NEITHER AGREES NOR DISAGREES.

The City of Watsonville has not confirmed the features and performance of such programs in other jurisdictions.

31. Enforcement programs vary tremendously throughout North America.

Response: Santa Cruz City Council AGREES.

Response: Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors AGREES.

Response: City of Watsonville AGREES.

Conclusions

1. At the present rate of intake, the county will need to close the Buena Vista landfill in 15 years and move to a new location.
2. Reducing the amount of recyclable materials that go into the county landfill could lengthen the site's life by five years.
3. The increased amount of solid waste generated by requiring mandatory garbage and recycling pickup could fill the county's landfill sooner than its currently projected lifetime. The increased amount of recycling might not be enough to offset the extra volume.
4. The quality of public information on recycling varies, depending on which agency produces it.
5. Some buyers pay more than others for specific recycled materials.
6. Consolidating the contracts to sell specific materials from the various county recycling entities offers the potential for higher prices for the different categories of materials.
7. Santa Cruz County exceeded the state mandate for the 50 percent solid waste diversion requirement in 2001.
8. While recycling efforts throughout Santa Cruz County have enabled the landfills to surpass the minimum goals, there is still more to do. The ideal goal would be to capture 100% of the recyclable materials being generated in the county. Practicality dictates that such a goal is not entirely realistic. However Santa Cruz County can do better.
9. "Educate, encourage, enforce" is an approach that has proven to help increase recycling efforts.

Recommendations

1. The County of Santa Cruz should examine its operation of the Buena Vista landfill. Close monitoring and enforcement of recycling practices could reduce the amount of recyclables entering the landfill. This could include positive incentives for proper disposal and citations for improper disposal of recyclables.

Response: Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors AGREES.

This recommendation has already been implemented. Ongoing evaluations of landfill practices have occurred on a regular basis over the last 15 years and program changes or new programs are implemented frequently.

We have been providing rate incentives for over 15 years to customers who appropriately separate specific recyclable commodities. In order to address those landfill users who still elect not to participate in the wide variety of recycling opportunities we provide, we are preparing to implement an extensive sorting operation for construction and commercial wastes to further reduce recyclables from entering the landfill. This program will also include physical site improvements to make recycling easier and more convenient for the public. In support of this program, we will be proposing future ordinance changes that would also ban specific recyclable items from the landfill, including provisions for enforcement.

2. The county, the cities of Santa Cruz and Watsonville and other local agencies involved in recycling should be more cooperative among themselves. For maximum public exposure and fiscal efficiency, they should coordinate printed recycling information and media coverage.

Response: Santa Cruz City Council PARTIALLY DISAGREES.

The recommendation will not be implemented across all printed materials and media coverage. Recycling programs vary by community and communities target different problems, populations, opportunities, and safety and environmental issues that are unique to that community. The City of Santa Cruz participates with other agencies within the region on coordinated outreach for some types of media (especially regional media such as TV) and some public events. We will continue to do this when it provides a clear benefit to our purpose and public. A recent example of the importance of clearly designed and distinctive media information was a very serious problem created for the City of Santa Cruz by a TV ad run for the Waste Management operations of the County. The TV ad told “Santa Cruz County customers” that they no longer needed to separate their paper and containers in their blue recycling carts. Many City of Santa Cruz customers saw this ad, and assumed that since they live within the County, they no longer need to separate their recyclables. However, the City has not yet moved to a single-stream sorting system, and we have been experiencing a much greater degree of contamination in loads, resulting in a higher percentage of materials that must be disposed of, and increased staff and equipment costs to hand sort the materials at the recycling center.

Response: Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors AGREES.

From the County's perspective, this recommendation has been implemented as described above in responses to findings 19 and 20. In addition, the County would welcome the interest of those cities who have dropped out of these joint programs and elected not to participate to re-initiate their involvement. Programs for joint public outreach efforts already exist, and the County is actively participating with other agencies. The County is also continuing to support countywide outreach efforts through our contract with Ecology Action to promote home composting, prepare recycling guides and participate in community fairs and events across the county.

Response: City of Watsonville PARTIALLY AGREES.

Whenever possible, this has been implemented. Where practicable, regional coordination on recycling information does occur. An example is the curbside waste oil program. However, Watsonville has developed a number of recycling programs that are operationally distinct from those in the County and Santa Cruz City. As such, Watsonville has to provide information to their residents that is not applicable to programs in the other areas. An example of this is the City's fully commingled curbside recycling program, which is based on undivided carts, serviced every-other-week.

3. Local recycling entities should take a regional approach to obtain countywide contracts in order to combine and sell together each category of recycled materials to the highest bidder. They should total the volume at the various locations, rather than collect the material at a central station.

Response: Santa Cruz City Council DISAGREES.

The recommendation will not be implemented across all materials. Programs vary by types of materials collected, mix of materials collected, type of processing, and storage space. This impacts the potential buyers and transportation schedules, which may make countywide contracts infeasible. City of Santa Cruz staff has held conversations in the past with other regional recyclers on this topic and will continue to explore this option for materials where it appears to have a financial benefit.

Response: Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors AGREES.

From the County's perspective, this recommendation has been implemented. The County and Cities of Scotts Valley and Capitola all utilize the collection and recycling services of a private hauler, Waste Management. Waste Management, as a private, for-profit entity, has its own internal process for preparing and marketing materials. Waste Management is the largest recycling collector in North America and has well-developed markets for all collected materials, including most

of the low value commodities that are hard to market. Waste Management collects and co-markets all recyclable materials collected by these county jurisdictions as well as jurisdictions within Monterey County at their combined processing facility in Castroville. In turn, recyclables from Waste Management's many operations across North America are combined for mass marketing to end users all over the world in order to achieve the highest and most stable market values.

The Cities of Santa Cruz and Watsonville collect and process their recyclables using city staff and facilities. Both cities could elect to approach Waste Management to work out details for combined marketing of their recyclables. Waste Management has informed the County that they have provided combined marketing service for other municipalities across the country.

Response: City of Watsonville PARTIALLY AGREES.

This recommendation has not yet been implemented. Watsonville uses an aggressive marketing strategy to obtain the highest price for its recycled materials. If the other agencies were willing to pursue this technique, Watsonville would be open to joining a regional marketing coalition.

4. Local recycling agencies should consider the experience of other communities and decide whether mandatory recycling would be beneficial.

Response: Santa Cruz City Council AGREES.

The recommendation has already been implemented. At this time, the City of Santa Cruz does not consider the costs of enforcement of mandatory recycling to be worth any diversion gain it might garner, since our recycling rates continue to increase without it. We will reevaluate at such time as our diversion flatlines, and will look at our waste composition at that time to see what action is warranted to continue toward a zero-waste goal.

Response: Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors CANNOT RESPOND.

The recommendation requires further analysis.

The County regularly evaluates recycling and waste management programs in communities across the U.S, Asia and Europe for new and innovative ideas. Many of our current programs are modeled after other successful programs we have evaluated. Mandatory collection has been demonstrated to improve participation and waste diversion. This recommendation will be analyzed as part of the renewal process for the collection franchise with Waste Management in the spring of 2005.

Response: City of Watsonville CANNOT RESPOND.

This recommendation has not yet been implemented. Watsonville is researching mandatory recycling at this time.

5. Cardboard and office paper are the focus when landfills ban commercial waste. These are high dollar items for re-sale. To enforce these bans, landfill operators should:
 - Refuse loads of cardboard and office paper.
 - Impose fines on haulers of cardboard and office paper.
 - Track down offending customers and fine them.
 - Place a significant amount of responsibility on haulers to force customers to comply.

Response: Santa Cruz City Council DISAGREES.

The recommendation will not be implemented. Our Resource Recovery Facility staff currently checks loads at the gate, at the public tipping area, and at the landfill face, and if large amounts of any type of recyclable material are seen, they are directed to the appropriate off-loading area to try to capture those materials. Our collection and public education staff also contact customers and encourage them to use recycling containers for cardboard, paper, or containers when a large amount of those items are seen in the refuse containers. Our refuse rate structure encourages reduction in garbage volumes, and recycling containers and collection is included for no extra charge. At this time, we do not feel that the additional staff time and costs of a landfill ban on cardboard and paper are warranted.

Response: Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors PARTIALLY AGREES.

The recommendation has not yet been implemented.

The Department of Public Works will be proposing future ordinance changes for Board consideration that would ban specific recyclable items from the landfill and propose provisions for enforcement. Potential items to be considered for bans include cardboard, yardwaste, woodwaste, scrap metal, and concrete. The department anticipates preparation of proposed ordinance changes will occur in spring 2005, after all the upgrades and improvements to our recycling and public service facilities are completed.

Response: City of Watsonville PARTIALLY AGREES.

This has been partially implemented. The City owns and operates the solid waste collection franchise and the city landfill. As such, the City is able to control the collection and disposal of these two materials. City garbage truck drivers deliver

2003 – 2004 Santa Cruz County Grand Jury
Final Report and Responses

any drop box bearing more than 50% recyclable material (including cardboard and paper) to the City Materials Recovery Facility for sorting.

The City encourages diversion of recyclable materials by collecting them at no cost. In general, this arrangement has worked very well, as is evident from the City's very impressive 72% diversion rates for 2001 and 2002.

Occasionally, the City has had to use fines to correct chronic contamination problems in cardboard containers. The city has issued fines as high as \$565 per container for contamination of cardboard with trash.

6. The City of Santa Cruz Public Works Department and in particular the Waste Reduction Coordinator should be commended for its excellent work in public awareness through its publications and media coverage. It should be commended for winning the 2004 Award of Excellence in Writing for the statewide competition conducted by the California Public Information Officials (CAPIO).

Response: Santa Cruz City Council AGREES.

The recommendation has already been implemented.

7. The Valley Women's Club should be commended for using recycling revenues to finance its charitable services to the community.

Response: Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors AGREES.

The Board of Supervisors shares the Grand Jury's appreciation of the Valley Women's Club's use of recycling revenues to fund its charitable services to the community.

8. The California Grey Bears should be commended for its service to the seniors of Santa Cruz County and for using recycling as one means to raise money.

Response: Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors AGREES.

The Board of Supervisors shares the Grand Jury's appreciation of the California Grey Bears for their service to seniors and for their recycling efforts.

9. The County of Santa Cruz should be commended for exceeding the state mandate of 50 percent solid waste diversion in 2001.

Response: Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors

The Board of Supervisors appreciates the Grand Jury's acknowledgement of the efforts of the Department of Public Works and the residents of Santa Cruz County to meet this mandate.

Responses Required

Entity	Findings	Recommendations	Respond Within
Santa Cruz City Council	1 - 4, 6, 8, 9, 15 - 17, 19 - 21, 23, 25, 27 - 31	2 - 6	90 days (September 30, 2004)
Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors	1 - 3, 5 - 7, 9 - 15, 17 - 20, 22 - 31	1 - 5, 7 - 9	90 days (September 30, 2004)
Watsonville City Council	1 - 3, 6, 8, 9, 15 - 17, 19, 20, 23, 25, 27 - 31	2 - 5	90 days (September 30, 2004)