

In 2016 the State of California adopted methane emissions targets in an effort to reduce short-lived climate pollutants under SB 1383 requiring all jurisdictions to reduce organic waste disposal by 75% by 2025. This was a necessary response to scientific discoveries that greenhouse gasses released by landfilling food and yard waste is a major contributor to pollutants and climate change.

The research uncovered that California landfills are the third largest source of generated methane gas. Organics like food scraps, yard trimmings, paper, and cardboard make up half of what is dumped in our landfills. The new regulations require jurisdictions to adopt and enforce an ordinance on reducing commercial and residential food waste generation. All jurisdictions starting in 2022 will need to provide organic waste collection services and utilize recycling facilities, procure products made from recycled organic material, as well as redirect 20 percent of edible food currently thrown away to those going hungry by the year 2025.

Under the new law, each jurisdiction is accountable for compliance by its source-generators, and CalRecycle, the State's recycling and waste regulatory agency, is authorized to issue escalating penalties for non-compliance beginning in 2022.

The City of Los Angeles has been at the forefront implementing waste collection programs and recycling to address operational efficiencies and climate change. In January 2017 the City approved seven RecyclA contracts for the collection of solid waste, recycling and organics from large multifamily properties and businesses. These contracts contained specific landfill reduction targets that must be contractually met. Since there is always room for improvement, the City must begin work to ensure our policies are in compliance with the new State regulations beginning in 2022.

During the course of the past year and a half, City residents have been coping with the economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. As a result, many residents have sought economic relief through the rent moratorium and utility bill assistance. The implementation of the new regulations associated with organics may have an impact on the City residents and businesses as they emerge from the pandemic. Given this, it is important that the City fully understand the economic impact of these regulations and provide ways to minimize their effect on struggling City residents and businesses.

The Bureau of Sanitation (BOS) should be requested to analyze the law and prepare a report with recommendations on phasing in the steps for data-collection, policy compliance, and future plans for capital improvements that comply with the new CalRecycle regulations. The City supports the goals to reduce emissions of short-lived climate pollutants statewide and the regulations approved by CalRecycle already align with the City's zero-waste goals.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the Bureau of Sanitation (BOS) be instructed to report to the City Council within 60 days on the steps necessary to comply with the CalRecycle regulations to reduce organic waste disposal by 75% by 2025; and the ability to develop a phased approach to compliance.

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I FURTHER MOVE that the BOS, with the assistance of the City Administrative Officer and the Chief Legislative Analyst, be instructed to report on the potential impact of the CalRecycle regulations on the ratepayers and methods and approaches to provide relief to ratepayers and minimize potential impacts.

CO-PRESENTED BY: *Mitch O'Farrell* *Paul Koretz*
MITCH O'FARRELL PAUL KORETZ
Councilmember, 13TH District Councilmember, 5TH District

SECONDED BY: *Paul Kerkovics*

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