



DON'T WASTE LA FACTS AND IMPACTS

Improving Waste Industry Jobs and Safety Standards

- There are at least 1,000 workers currently collecting waste in City of LA.¹ Across LA County, 5,000 recycling workers work in at least 10 recycling facilities.²
- **Jobs in the waste and recycling industry are one of the top ten most dangerous occupations, with 41 fatalities per 100,000 workers.**³ Fatalities and injuries in recycling happen more frequently than other risky professions like roofing and electrical power-line installers.
- Recycling jobs require lifting and sorting of heavy items like scrap metals, carpets, and lumber, which can lead to repetitive motion injuries, accidental amputations and fractured bones. Workers on the sorting line are exposed to toxic chemicals, fumes, dust, fungi, and dioxins.⁴ Overexposure to waste can result in lung and gastrointestinal illness, throat soreness, stomach problems, and diarrhea.⁵
- **Many recycling workers are hired temporarily as an industry-standard practice.** Current estimates show at least a third of recycling sorters in Los Angeles are temporary workers.⁶
- For this reason, the Zero Waste LA plan would improve health and workplace safety through a robust facility certification program which would screen and monitor recycling facilities handling our waste. Facility certification has the potential to improve the lives of **over 10,000 LA County recycling workers.**

A Cleaner Environment for all Angelenos

Recycling and Composting:

- Currently, Los Angeles is the second biggest waste market in the country with **75% of our waste originating from the City's businesses and apartments.**
- **Nearly 1.2 million tons of food scraps and yard trimmings are thrown away** by LA residents and businesses. **Apartment dwellers' and businesses' current waste consists of 27% and 42% of compostable food waste, respectively.**

¹ City-wide collection: 2006-2010 ACS data for refuse and recycling collection workers (minus) Sanitation's estimated 877 recycling and collection workers.

² Guevarra, John. *From Waste to Resource: Restoring Our Economy with Recycling Careers*. LAANE, 2014, p. 16. Methodology for job projections based out of Los Angeles City Waste Characterization of recyclable material disposed and jobs multipliers based on Tellus Institute Methodology. Existing jobs: based on ILSR and EPA studies, the following NAICS were used to assess the processing sector. Compost and miscellaneous organics producers (NAICS 325314), MRFs (NAICS 56292), and recyclable material wholesalers (NAICS 42193). Employment numbers derived from 2010 County Business Patterns data.

³ US Bureau of Labor Statistics. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2012). National Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries in 2011.

⁴ Jacques, K., Dunkerley, C.J., Kosatsky, T., & Defresne, A. (2006). Exposure to aerosolized bacteria and fungi among collectors of commercial, mixed residential, recyclable, and compostable waste. *Science of the Total Environment*, 370, 23-28.

⁵ Gladding, T., Thorn, J., & Stott, D. (2003, June). Organic dust exposure and work-related effects among recycling workers. *American Journal of Industrial Medicine*, 43 (6), 584-591.

⁶ Jim Smith. Personal correspondence.

- In response to this problem, the City of LA created Zero Waste goals of recycling 90% of what we throw away by 2030. Fulfilling the Zero Waste goals requires our city to **recycle 2 million tons. In the next 5 years, this would result in recycling nearly 10 million tons of waste from landfills**, equal to the size of 45 L.A. City Halls.^{7 8}
- When our food scraps are landfilled, the mix of decomposing material and lack of oxygen releases methane. According to the US EPA, **landfills are responsible for more than 25% of methane emissions.**⁹
- Recycling these organic materials can create as many as **2,000 jobs** while reducing climate impacts.¹⁰

Truck Emissions

- Heavy-duty diesel trucks like waste hauling vehicles contributed **70% fine particulate matter (PM2.5)**, over **60% of particulate matter (PM10)**, and **40% of nitrogen oxide** to on-road emissions in 2000.¹¹
- **The Zero Waste LA plan would remove 2.6 million tons of greenhouse gas emissions, the equivalent of removing 517,400 vehicles from the road.**¹² Specifically, the Zero Waste LA plan will require franchised haulers to have 100 percent clean truck fleets by 2017. This transformation has the potential will phase out over 800 dirty diesel trucks in the city. Our transition to clean trucks will **reduce up to 94% of particulate matter emissions and up to 73% of nitrogen oxide emissions.**¹³

Customer Service

- **In an open market system, customers are not protected from being overcharged.** LAANE research revealed that businesses and their neighbors were charged different amounts for the same waste collection services. Some businesses were charged as much as \$200 extra for the same service. For this reason, the Zero Waste LA plan will ensure rates are fair and equitable.¹⁴
- Eight exclusive franchise cities, including Azusa, Bellflower, Beverly Hills, and Downey, saw **customer rates decrease from 2002 to 2010.**¹⁵

⁷ Bureau of Sanitation. The City of Los Angeles Solid Waste Integrated Resources Plan: A Zero Waste Master Plan. Los Angeles: October 2013. Volume II, p. 30.

⁸ 10 million tons of trash equals 20 million cubic yards or 540 million cubic feet. According to Emporis, the volume of Los Angeles City Hall is 12 million cubic feet. Source: 1 ton of trash equals 1.5 to 2.5 cubic yards, according to <http://www.zendergroup.org/docs/countingtrashfinal.pdf>

⁹ United States Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA). (2013, April 15). Communicating the Benefits of Recycling. <http://www.epa.gov/osw/conserves/tools/localgov/benefits/>.

¹⁰ Guevarra, John. From Waste to Resource: Restoring Our Economy with Recycling Careers. LAANE, 2014, p. 16.

¹¹ US Environmental Protection Agency. National Air Quality and Emissions Trends Report, Table A-1B: National Air Quality Trends Statistics for Criteria Pollutants, 1991–2000. Accessed from http://www.epa.gov/airtrends/data/table_a-01b.pdf.

¹² Bureau of Sanitation. The City of Los Angeles Solid Waste Integrated Resources Plan: A Zero Waste Master Plan. Los Angeles: October 2013. Volume II, p. 37.

¹³ Gordon, Deborah and Juliet Burdelski, James S. Cannon. Greening Garbage Trucks: New Technologies for Cleaner Air. INFORM, 2003, p. 39.

¹⁴ Bureau of Sanitation. The City of Los Angeles Solid Waste Integrated Resources Plan: A Zero Waste Master Plan. Los Angeles: October 2013.

¹⁵ LAANE. 2012. "Stabilizing Customer Rates in Exclusive Franchise Waste and Recycling Systems: An Analysis of Rates and Cost Drivers in LA County."