

Nov 21, 2012

Ms. Sharon Dickinson
200 North Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Ms. Dickinson,

As someone that cares deeply about Los Angeles and our environment, I urge you to fix the city's broken waste and recycling system by supporting an exclusive franchise system.

In our current failed system, too many Angelenos can't recycle at work or at their apartments, resulting in 2.5 million tons of trash going to landfills each year from LA's commercial and multi-family sectors alone that's 70% of what we landfill. This isn't sustainable: our landfill capacity is rapidly dwindling and the largest area landfill, Puente Hills, closes in 2013. We must make significant progress towards our Zero Waste goals to avoid costly and environmentally dubious alternatives like sending our waste by rail to the desert.

The current system lets low-road haulers skirt environmental and worker safety standards. Dirty diesel trash trucks on inefficient, overlapping routes pollute our air and destroy our streets. There are so many different companies the city can't possibly hold them accountable to recycling and clean air standards. Recyclables get exported overseas, where some is incinerated in countries with few environmental regulations. We are throwing too much away: recyclables, good green jobs, and clean air.

I support the Bureau of Sanitation's plan for an exclusive waste and recycling franchise system: the best way to meet our Zero Waste goals, hold haulers accountable, and reduce the impacts of the waste industry. Environmental and waste experts support this proposal, including the Sierra Club, NRDC, the Coalition for Clean Air, the Board of Public Works, and the City Council's environmental and waste committees. Non-profits, small businesses, and worker safety experts do, too. Sixty one cities in LA County and 31 cities in Orange County, plus San Francisco, San Jose, Oakland and Seattle all have exclusive franchise systems.

Exclusive waste franchises are tested. In fact, 55 cities in LA County, 31 cities in Orange County, San Francisco, San Jose, Oakland and Seattle all have exclusive franchise systems. Exclusive franchises are the best path for ensuring maximum diversion and recycling, as well as the best tool to help cities limit the impacts of commercial waste vehicles, which get an average of 3mpg and are the most damaging commercial vehicles on city streets. And an exclusive franchise system is the only system that allows cities to partner with haulers, and hold them responsible for achieving the goals and standards they say they will achieve.

A diverse coalition, led in part by NRDC, Sierra Club and Coalition for Clean Air, strongly supports the plan by the LA City Bureau of Sanitation and approved by the Board of Public Works, which calls for an exclusive franchise system for LA's commercial and multifamily waste system.

I strongly support this proposal and urge you to vote for these recommendations when they come before you.

This industry is too important and the implications too far-reaching for the city to adopt half-measures. We need dramatic change, and we need it now.

Thank you,

Mr. Spencer Stewart
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