

# **Sonoma County Joint Powers Authority:**

## ***A Model for Local Government Recycling and Waste Reduction***

### **Overview**

Sonoma County is a model of communities joining together through a regional agency to meet the requirements of the California Integrated Waste Management Act (AB 939, Sher, Chapter 1095, Statutes of 1989 as amended [IWMA]). The jurisdictions of Sonoma County worked together early in the planning process following the adoption of AB 939 in 1989.\* In 1992, they agreed to formalize this regional cooperation and formed the Sonoma County Waste Management Agency as a joint powers authority (JPA).



The JPA was formed to manage certain programs and waste streams that could most efficiently and cost-effectively be managed on a regional basis. Each jurisdiction retained responsibility for the collection of refuse, wood waste, and yard debris, and implementing other waste diversion programs at the local level (for example, curbside recycling). In 1996, the JPA became a regional agency. As a regional agency, the JPA now reports on the combined disposal, diversion, and programs of all the member jurisdictions, not on their individual accomplishments.

The Sonoma County JPA reported a diversion rate of 39 percent in its 1998 IWMA annual report to the California Integrated Waste Management Board (CIWMB). The major programs contributing to that diversion rate, in order of quantities diverted, were:

\*When referring only to the original waste management legislation, the term "AB 939" will be used.

- Yard debris composting (42 percent).
- Curbside recycling (23 percent).
- Commercial recycling (20 percent).
- Wood waste recovery (8 percent).
- County drop-offs (8 percent).
- Floor-sort and white goods program (6 percent).

### **Program Characteristics**

#### ***Location***

Sonoma County is the most northerly of the nine counties in the San Francisco Bay Area. The county is bordered by the Pacific Ocean on the west, Mendocino County on the north, Marin County and San Pablo Bay to the south, and Solano, Napa, and Lake counties to the east. U.S. Highway 101 is the major north-south route through the county. The county has a strong agricultural heritage (including world-famous vineyards), along with an increasingly diverse mix of residential, commercial, and industrial development. Its 1998 population was 443,669.

#### ***Regional Agreement***

The joint powers authority (JPA) was established under California Government Code section 6500. Participants initially agreed to work together on wood, yard, and household hazardous waste issues and public education. Each of the county's ten jurisdictions has one representative, and each representative has one vote. A majority vote of a quorum is sufficient for action in many activities. However, a unanimous vote of the total membership is required on:

- Major program expansion (beyond the initial wood, yard, household hazardous waste, and public education programs).
- Capital expenditures greater than \$50,000.
- Adoption of annual budgets.

The County of Sonoma and the following cities are the members of the JPA:

- Cloverdale
- Cotati
- Healdsburg
- Petaluma
- Rohnert Park
- Santa Rosa
- Sebastopol
- Sonoma
- Windsor

The JPA has a contract with the Sonoma County Department of Transportation and Public Works to provide staffing and administrative services. The county's integrated waste manager serves as the JPA's director. The JPA is also provided with clerks, an administrative aide, and part-time support from legal counsel, accountants, program staff, and other staff as needed.

### ***JPA Services***

The JPA provides a wide range of services to all member jurisdictions, including:

- Preparing required reports (for example, non-disposal facility elements, disposal and diversion reports, annual reports).
- Wood waste and yard debris recycling.
- Disposal and transfer station site services.
- Other diversion programs (for example, home composting, commercial food waste composting).
- Countywide waste reduction education.
- Funding for the Recycling Market Development Zone (RMDZ) of Sonoma, Mendocino, and Lake counties.
- Household hazardous waste management.

### ***Member Liabilities***

The JPA agreement assigns responsibility for payment of any civil penalties as follows: the JPA shall pay the entire penalty; or if an individual participant is responsible for the assessment of the penalty, then that participant shall pay the entire penalty; or if multiple participants, but not all, are responsible for the penalty, then the penalty shall be allocated equally and imposed upon responsible participants.

Prior to assessment of penalties, the JPA may review the basis for the proposed penalties and work with the responsible JPA participants to identify corrective actions that might be taken.

Each participant is responsible for implementing the programs set forth in JPA documents and for meeting the diversion requirements of the IWMA within its boundaries. In the event that the JPA is dissolved, each participant is responsible for complying with IWMA requirements in accordance with programs set out in the JPA's documents.

### ***Diversion Rate***

A total quantity of 478,848.74 tons was reported disposed in 1998. Tons reported recycled and composted in 1998 amounted to 123,446.49. The diversion rate was determined by the JPA as 39 percent, using the CIWMB diversion rate measurement plus calculation methodology. However, the JPA does not include class II waste from San Joaquin County that would increase disposal tonnage by 4 percent. The CIWMB proposes to include this, and that is being contested by the JPA.

### ***Reports***

The JPA is responsible for preparing the following reports on behalf of all the jurisdictions:

- Non-disposal facility elements.
- Disposal and diversion reports.
- Annual reports.

In 1996, the JPA assumed countywide responsibility for achieving the 25 percent and 50 percent diversion goals for all the member jurisdictions. This reduced the reporting responsibility of each jurisdiction. The JPA now submits all required reports to the CIWMB.

### ***Transfer and Disposal Site Services***

The county is responsible for managing the central disposal site in Petaluma and transfer stations in Annapolis, Occidental, Sonoma, Healdsburg, and Guerneville. At all these disposal sites, the county receives both source-separated recyclables and refuse. Large transfer trailers haul refuse from the transfer stations to the central disposal site for landfilling. Other transfer trailers haul wood waste and yard debris from three of the transfer stations (Sonoma, Guerneville, and Healdsburg) to the central landfill for processing.

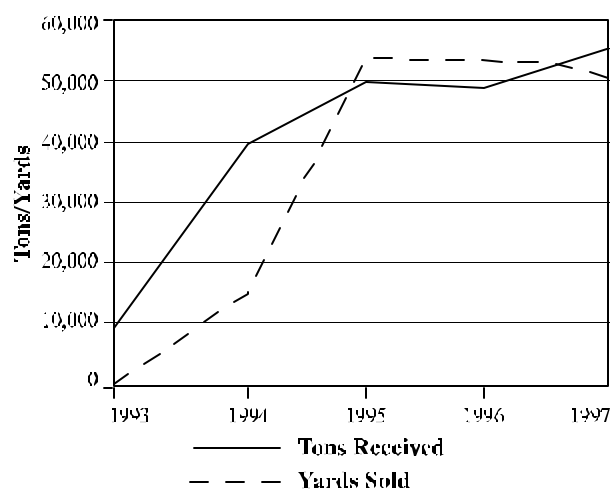
### **Wood Waste and Yard Debris Recycling**

The processing of wood waste and yard debris for recycling and composting is one of the original services that the JPA was formed to offer its members. However, JPA member jurisdictions are responsible for collecting wood waste and yard debris themselves.

The wood waste processing program was assisted by the county setting aside an area for this activity at the central disposal site. In 1993, the JPA established a contract with the joint venture of Sonoma Compost Company and Empire Waste Management (a Waste Management company) to operate this program.

The yard debris program was also started in 1993 with the JPA contracting with the Sonoma Compost joint venture. The county built the composting facility at the central disposal site and provided it to the JPA for use by the JPA's contractor. Most Sonoma County jurisdictions then began curbside yard debris collection programs (all currently provide that, except Cloverdale, which has a drop-off system).

**Figure 1: Yard Debris Delivered and Compost Sold, 1993-1997**



Each participating single-family residence is provided a 90-gallon rolling cart for yard debris. Yard debris is collected every other week by the licensed refuse hauler in each jurisdiction and delivered to the central disposal site. An estimated 80 percent of residents participate in this program.

The central disposal site compost facility accepts yard debris from these residential collection programs as well as from self-hauled residential and commercial customers. All of these materials are then processed and placed in windrows for composting.

All of the county's disposal sites receive clean wood waste and yard debris for reduced tipping fees to encourage people to recycle. The current tipping fee for refuse is \$45.20 per ton. The tipping fee for wood waste is \$12 per ton, and the tipping fee for yard debris is \$27 per ton. The county has also banned yard debris from being landfilled, although this policy is only enforced through signage.

Wood waste is chipped for sale as mulch and biofuel. Yard debris is composted and sold as various products. Yard debris is the single largest product recycled by Sonoma County: more than 50,000 tons per year.

The JPA agreement with Sonoma Compost reserves 10 percent of the products produced at the composting facility for distribution to JPA members. Each of the JPA's jurisdictions receives a quarterly allocation from the composting program for use in their jurisdiction (for example, parks, playgrounds, schools, public buildings, and streets landscaping projects, and for distribution to the public at special events).

The City of Sonoma uses the majority of its allocation for Plaza Park, which surrounds its city hall. The Town of Windsor used its allocation in 1998 for the Windsor Balloon Festival. The City of Sebastopol used some of its allocation as a mulch to protect areas revegetated with native plants and trees in the Laguna de Santa Rosa Wetland Preserve.

Sonoma Compost has also been particularly active in the formation of the California Compost Quality Council (CCQC). CCQC was formed to help market compost particularly to the huge agricultural and horticultural markets by assuring that compost products have met quality standards. Of particular significance have been the cooperative partnerships that Sonoma Compost has formed with many of the local vineyards to use compost.

At the end of 1998, the JPA approved a pilot program to divert up to 50 tons per day of the yard debris accepted at the central disposal site to the City of Santa Rosa Laguna Subregional Compost Facility (Laguna compost facility). This pilot program is testing the material as an amendment to the existing biosolids composting facility located at the wastewater treatment plant. That pilot program began April 26, 1999. If successful, the Laguna Compost Facility may become a permanent yard debris processing location.

### ***Food Waste Composting***

The JPA has funded a pilot program of research and development to demonstrate the feasibility of on-site handling and composting of source-separated food wastes at selected businesses and institutions. The JPA has made available a CompTainer in-vessel composter for moving between sites to handle materials generated by various participants. Participants included:

- 4-H Chicken-Que at county fairgrounds.
- Mistral Restaurant.
- Santa Rosa Junior College cafeteria.
- Food for Thought natural food grocery store.

After the pilot program was completed, the JPA returned the original CompTainer to the company that owned it. Three businesses in Sonoma County then purchased composters for their own use:

- Food for Thought.
- Vineyard Inn.
- Sonoma Developmental Center (purchased through the CIWMB Project Recycle fund).

Also, based on the information generated by this pilot project, the JPA is currently developing another pilot project to determine the feasibility and cost of food waste collection and composting from commercial generators (for example, restaurants, grocery stores, and office cafeterias).

### ***C&D Recycling***

The JPA encourages people to recycle broken concrete and asphalt through a combination of pricing policies and promotions activities. C&D recycling businesses are listed in the JPA's recycling guide, including:

- Blue Rock Quarry.

- Canyon Rock.
- Cheney Gulch Quarry.
- Dutra Materials.
- Mark West Quarry.
- Rock Recycle Company.
- Shamrock Materials.
- Stony Point Rock Quarry.
- Syar Industries.
- Zamaroni Quarry.

When someone calls the county's eco-desk hotline, information is provided from the recycling guide about C&D recycling options available to them.

Most of the facilities listed in the recycling guide accept clean concrete/asphalt for a fee that is less than the \$45.20 per ton fee to dispose of these materials at county disposal sites. Several private businesses accept concrete ranging from no charge to \$20 per load. As a result, the county is not receiving most of this material. Some private companies accept concrete with rebar/wire and brick. Some of these will also accept porcelain toilets, sinks, and tubs (without metal parts).

Other facilities reuse or recycle used building materials, including Beyond Waste and Ray's Trading Company.

Beyond Waste, for example, makes value-added wood products such as flooring and architectural details out of the used lumber it receives, generally from deconstruction projects it conducts. In addition, all of these materials are accepted at most of the county's disposal facilities that are listed in the recycling guide.

In 1993, the City of Cotati (one of the member agencies) adopted a model "deconstruction" ordinance. This ordinance requires that reusable and recyclable materials from all structures and construction materials to be demolished in the city shall be made available for salvage prior to demolition. Any entity seeking to demolish a structure within the City of Cotati is required to make known publicly its intent to demolish a structure and the availability of potentially salvageable materials by:

1. Placing an ad in a newspaper of general circulation with the address of the site and the hours and dates that the materials will be available for salvage, making such materials available for at least 10 days.
2. Mailing or delivering a written notice to all parties on file at the City of Cotati wishing to receive such notice with the address of the site and the hours and dates that the materials will be available for salvage.

The city, at its discretion, may choose to take these actions in the place of the entity wishing to demolish the structure.

### ***Schools Recycling***

One of the schools in Sonoma County is highlighted in another CIWMB model study, "School Recycling: Increasing Diversion Rates at School and in the Home." The Oak Grove School in Graton is diverting 88 percent of all its wastes from the landfill through a comprehensive model program. From 1994–1996, the Small Change Theatre was contracted to present professional theatrical performances on waste reduction, recycling, and reuse. In 1994, they presented "Waste in Time"; in 1995, "Showdown at the 3R Ranch"; and in 1996, "Trashzilla."

Beginning in 1997, the JPA began a pilot program to work with schools on curriculum and to encourage them to divert as much waste as possible from landfills with operational changes. However, most schools have not followed the Oak Grove lead because they are overwhelmed by State education requirements and have shown no interest in implementing such a comprehensive program. The JPA has concluded that a persistent "champion" is an essential component of the successful program at Oak Grove School.

### ***Reuse and Repair***

The JPA encourages reuse and repair activities in the county through a variety of services at disposal sites and outreach and education activities. At disposal sites, the following items are accepted for reuse and repair: books, building materials (for example, doors, windows, dimensional lumber), computers, furniture, (for example, desks, tables, and chairs), mattresses, nursery pots, latex paint, pallets, toilets/sinks/tubs, and wine bottles.

In the recycling guide, the JPA highlights the following opportunities, in addition to donating them to waste haulers and disposal sites:

**Books.** Friends of the Libraries, Goodwill Industries, The Global Book Exchange.

**Computers.** CA Computer Exchange, Center for Employment Training, Computers and Education/Computer Recycling, Computers and...More, Computer Thrift Shop, and Data Professionals.

**Electronics.** Same as computers above, plus Ed's Television.

**Eyeglasses.** Cotati Lion's Club drop-off box, Dr. Leon Becnel Optometry, Frizelle-Enos, Co., G&G Market, Lenscrafters, Longs Drug Store, and Safeway.

**Foam/padding.** Quality padding.

**Food donations.** Redwood Empire Food Bank.

**Hangers.** Some dry cleaners accept "blue" shirt hangers for reuse.

**Hearing Aids.** Lion's Club boxes at Longs Drug Store and Safeway.

**Secondhand.** [www.secondhand.com](http://www.secondhand.com) is a free directory and newsletter of secondhand shops throughout the county, provided by Rummaging Through Northern California.

**Sporting Equipment.** High Tide Surf Shop, Nike Recycling Center c/o Reuse-A-Shoe, 1-800-352-6453, Play It Again Sports.

**Styrofoam.** Win Cup, FP International, Fitch Mt. Packaging, Mail Boxes Etc., Aim Mail Center, The Central Office, Laura's Pack-It Post-it & Copy Center, Mail & More, The Mail Center, The Package Deal, McKean's Create-It, Copy-It, Mail-It.

**Textiles/rags.** Goodwill Industries.

**Tires.** Firestone, J&L Tire Recycling.

**Toner Cartridges.** Computech Systems, Encore Ribbon, Laser Precision, Lazer Blue, Mail Boxes, Etc., Tru-Graphics.

**Videotapes.** Ecomedia Recycling Center, GreenDisk.

In addition, the JPA refers people to their telephone directory Yellow Pages for repair

options in the following categories: appliances, small—service and repair; clocks—repair; computers—service and repair; photographic equipment—repair; shavers, electric—repair; TVs and radios—dealers and service; tools, electric—repair; vacuum cleaners—repair; and watches—repair.

### ***Curbside Recycling***

The primary role the JPA plays for curbside recycling is in outreach and education efforts. The recycling guide lists the following materials collected in curbside recycling programs offered in Sonoma County in different configurations by different haulers:

- Newspaper, magazines, and junk mail.
- Telephone books and catalogs.
- Cardboard and cartonboard (for example, cereal boxes).
- Brown paper bags.
- Paper egg cartons.
- Aluminum and tin/bimetal cans.
- Foil and food trays.
- Metal lids from jars/bottles.
- Glass food and beverage containers.
- #1 and #2 narrow-necked plastic containers (any color).
- Milk cartons, juice boxes, and soy/rice milk cartons.

Services are provided by the following haulers:

- Cloverdale Disposal Service.
- Empire Waste Management.
- Larry's Sanitary Service.
- Pacific Coast Disposal.
- Sonoma Garbage Collectors.
- Sunrise Garbage Service.
- West Sonoma County Disposal.

### ***Drop-Off Recycling***

The JPA encourages drop-off recycling activities in the county through a variety of services at disposal sites and outreach and education activities. Residents simply deposit the material

type into the correct recycling bin. The Central and Healdsburg RecycleTowns are operated by Garbage Reincarnation, Inc., a local nonprofit organization.

At most disposal sites, the following items are accepted free for recycling:

- All materials collected in curbside recycling programs (see above).
- Scrap metals.
- Auto batteries.
- Motor oil.
- Oil filters.
- Latex paint.
- Toilets/sinks/tubs.
- Foam/padding.
- Wood.
- Pallets.
- Yard debris.

In addition, the following items are accepted for recycling for a fee:

- Appliances (those with freon are charged \$20 each; those without freon are charged \$10 each).
- Tires (\$2 and up, per tire, depending on size).

### ***Outreach and Education***

One of the hallmarks of the Sonoma County program is its wide variety of outreach and education programs promoting a new ethic of reduce-reuse-recycle and working towards a truly sustainable world.

In the residential sector, the Sonoma County JPA is starting pioneering work to achieve sustainable behavior changes through community-based social marketing. The JPA is planning on using scientific tools (for example, a professional marketing firm and focus groups) to identify barriers to resource conservation and to target program marketing and outreach where and how it will be most effective.

In commercial recycling outreach, the JPA encourages businesses to work not only to recycle waste but also to reduce waste, prevent pollution, and help restore the economy to work in synch with nature. They hope to demonstrate the value of

businesses redefining their corporate goals to include long-term sustainability. The JPA is building on the messages advocated in *The Natural Step* by Paul Hawken (author of *The Ecology of Commerce* and more recently, *Natural Capitalism*). They are working to develop additional economic incentives, planning, and permit requirements to encourage businesses to embrace these goals.

Some of the many programs the JPA has implemented include:

**Sonoma County Recycling Guide**. This is a comprehensive 24-page recycling, waste reduction, reuse, and hazardous waste directory of all services to address these needs in the county. The JPA has distributed this annually since 1993 to all county residences and businesses. The resources for the guide are updated annually through an update letter sent to each participating organization three months prior to publication. Update letters must be signed by an owner/manager and returned by mail or fax in order to be included in the publication. Organizations that don't respond to the update letter are contacted by phone.

The use of the recycling guide is measured by surveys of participants at "household toxics roundup" events and through referrals from eco-desk calls. According to the eco-desk 1999 annual report, of 2,972 recorded referrals, the guide ranked as the second highest source of referrals (referring 525 people, or 18 percent of the referrals).

**Eco-Desk Hotline**. The JPA public education coordinator answers calls from the public on the eco-desk hotline from 12 noon to 3 p.m. Monday–Friday, primarily about recycling and hazardous waste disposal. In addition, the SonoMax program is operated through the eco-desk. Due to call volume, the actual staff time spent answering the eco-desk is about one-third less than the available hours open.

Eco-desk staff members also file new reference materials in a resource library, including educational materials and recycled products information. A voice mail system features prerecorded information on a variety of topics, including used oil recycling, paint, plastics, SonoMax, recycling, and seasonal programs. The

eco-desk hotline number is (707) 565-DESK(3375). Calls and e-mails received at the eco-desk are logged into an Access database.

**SonoMax**. Patterned after the California Materials Exchange Program (CALMAX), SonoMax is designed to find reuse and recycling opportunities for materials traditionally discarded by local businesses. A quarterly newsletter advertises materials available and wanted. Listers are asked to keep track of the number of calls received as a result of the ad and details of successful exchanges. Listings are also advertised on [www.recyclenow.org/sonomax/](http://www.recyclenow.org/sonomax/), the SonoMax Web site. Most of the materials listed in SonoMax are free; transportation and costs (if any) are negotiated between the lister and the interested party.

In 1999, about 124 tons of material was diverted from the landfill as a result of "available" SonoMax ads, and 7.5 tons of material was diverted as a result of "wanted" SonoMax ads. In 1999, SonoMax listers reported receiving about 1,354 calls, which was a 12 percent increase over the 1,208 calls received in 1998.

The SonoMax Web site is increasingly used by participants placing ads. Some users report that the Web site has replaced their need to receive the quarterly printed flyer.

**Home Composting**. The JPA has contracted with the University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) master gardener program for many years to provide its home composting program. This program provides residents with workshops, public education, and informational materials and maintains demonstration gardens. The JPA has organized truckload bin sales with two home composting bin vendors that approached them. For a limited time (until April 30, 2000), the JPA currently is offering local residents a rebate of up to \$20 on the purchase of a compost bin. As of early April 2000, 32 rebates were processed. For more information, residents call the eco-desk hotline or UCCE.

**Bay Area Creative Re-Use/North Bay (BACR)**. The JPA funds this effort that collects materials from Sonoma County businesses and provides them to nonprofit organizations, schools, and city or county departments. Materials, supplies, equipment, and furniture are reused for

educational, art, and other purposes. The donating businesses receive on-site waste assessments, pickups on an individual basis, and an annual statement of materials donated that can be used to obtain tax benefits. BACR also exchanges materials with reuse organizations in Berkeley, San Francisco, and Sunnyvale. In 1997, a total of 88,289 pounds of materials, supplies, and equipment were collected from 130 businesses, organizations, or individuals and given to 296 organizations with more than 41,400 participants benefiting.

**Christmas Tree Recycling.** The JPA has helped organize the Christmas tree recycling program since 1992. Initially, the JPA assisted in advertising county and volunteer efforts. Since automated curbside collection of yard waste was implemented throughout the county, the JPA has worked with nonprofit organizations (for example, Scouts) to collect whole trees door-to-door for a \$5 donation per tree from residents. This service avoids the requirement that trees be cut to fit into the yard debris container. In addition, drop-off yard waste collection sites are available in every jurisdiction except the City of Sonoma. Residents that use the yard waste cans are asked to cut their trees to fit in the containers.

**Market Development.** A recycling market development zone (RMDZ) was established by the CIWMB in 1995, initially for Sonoma and Mendocino counties. Lake County joined the RMDZ in 1997. The JPA helped fund this effort, including initial funding of the Sonoma County Economic Development Board as the zone administrator. Zone administration was transferred to Lake County once they joined in this regional effort.

The goal of the RMDZ is to attract and establish new businesses and industries that add economic value to secondary materials. The RMDZ works with local government officials, economic development specialists, and solid waste professionals. The RMDZ performs the following functions to meet this goal:

- Develops a successful marketing program and information packet.
- Develops and maintains a database of local manufacturers that could be potential candidates for RMDZ loans.

- Prepares and circulates news releases to local media and business publications.
- Makes presentations to local business groups.
- Promotes workshops for targeted businesses and industries.
- Works with local lending institutions to inform them and create a supportive environment for financing of RMDZ businesses.

To date, the RMDZ was instrumental in assisting five businesses to acquire RMDZ loans for machinery and equipment, working capital, land, and refinancing of current debt.

**Hazardous Wastes.** Since 1993, the JPA has offered about 12 household toxics roundups a year, with at least one in each jurisdiction. From 1993–1997, approximately 17,650 households were served, or 10 percent of all Sonoma County households. About half of the participants of each event have not previously used a roundup. In 1998, a survey of participants found that they learned about the event in the following ways:

- Newspaper—25 percent.
- Utility bill flyer—19 percent.
- Recycling guide—14 percent.
- Roundup schedule/dump—11 percent.
- Word-of-mouth—7 percent.
- Garbage can flyer—7 percent.
- Community banner—6 percent.
- Eco-desk hotline—4 percent.
- Drive-by and other—3 percent each.
- Radio—1 percent.

Pounds per participant increased in 1996 and 1997. This occurred after a change in the law that allows participants to transport up to 15 gallons of waste versus the 5 gallons allowed prior to 1996. In 1997, the JPA adjusted the way it pays its contractor for organizing these roundups and decreased its costs per pound to \$0.93 and cost per participant to \$81. The total number of households served annually continues to increase over time. In 1998, the total number of households served was 7,815; in 1999, the number increased to 8,456.

In 1993, the JPA started a small quantity generators program for businesses that generate less than 27 gallons of hazardous waste per month. Business collections occur the day before the household roundups at the same location. Businesses make appointments and are charged disposal fees based on the type and quantity of waste received. These charges are much less than small businesses would be able to arrange on their own. From 1993 to 1997, this program served 377 different businesses and 666 participants. Another 158 businesses were served in 1998 and 108 businesses in 1999.

The JPA plans to replace these programs with a permanent hazardous waste facility now under construction at the central disposal site, a mobile collection program, and a "Toxic Taxi." The Toxic Taxi will provide door-to-door service for a fee when the hazardous waste facility opens. The Toxic Taxi began operations in 1999, serving 186 households and 22 businesses, at a cost of \$1.19 per pound collected. Although slightly more than the \$1.02 cost per pound for the toxics roundup events in 1999, this service provides a higher degree of convenience to customers.

The JPA also distributes brochures on safer alternatives to the use of household hazardous wastes. The goal of this effort is to change the public's behavior regarding toxic products by reducing their use and eliminating their improper disposal. As part of this effort, JPA staff members assist the California Peer Review Project, which accumulates scientific literature to support safer alternative recommendations.

**Battery, Oil, and Paint Recycling.** The JPA has obtained more than \$800,000 in used oil recycling grants from the CIWMB since 1994. Used oil block grants (\$727,089 from 1994-1997) provided funds to expand the used oil collection network in the county. The 1993 recycling guide listed only four oil recycling centers, while the 1998 recycling guide lists 79 centers. Additionally, the JPA asked oil recycling centers to also accept used oil filters (29 now accept them) and antifreeze (accepted at 19 centers). Other services provided with CIWMB grant monies include:

- Storm drain stenciling.
- Fleet manager training about re-refined oil use.

- Brochures and a school education program.
- Oil recycling center audits.
- Purchase of mobile oil filter crushers, oil tanks, oil filter collection containers, oil filter refiners (for buses and fleet vehicles), oil recycling center signs, halogen detectors, and oil tank sheds.
- Support of the eco-desk oil recycling voice mail system (English and Spanish).
- Printing and distribution of "No Toxics" garbage can stickers.
- Support of household toxics roundups.
- Booth displays and giveaways.
- Staff training and an intern position.

All batteries are accepted at household toxics roundups. Local retailers that accept rechargeable nickel-cadmium batteries for recycling at no cost to the customer include:

- Ace Hardware.
- Circuit City.
- Radio Shack.
- Target.
- True Value Hardware.
- Wal-Mart.

Auto batteries are accepted at the central disposal site and all transfer stations (except the Occidental transfer station).

All paint products are accepted at household toxics roundups. The JPA has set up a paint exchange program at the Annapolis, Central, Healdsburg, and Sonoma disposal sites. Usable half-full to full latex paint cans are accepted from the public at no charge and redistributed to the public at no charge.

The battery, oil, and paint events accepted 29 percent of the oil collected in the county in 1998 and 77 percent of the oil filters.

**GREEN Brochure.** The JPA works informally with 13 other governmental agencies within Sonoma County as the Governmental Resources Environmental Education Network (GREEN). This network produced a poster and brochure that includes several environmental messages about local environmental issues, including:

- Oil recycling.
- Household toxics and pesticides.
- Solid waste management.
- Air quality.
- Water quality.

The GREEN brochure was distributed with the 1998 recycling guide and by participating agencies.

A staff member of the JPA is chair of GREEN. She prepares agendas and sends out meeting notices. GREEN has done two projects as a committee. Those who attend meetings vote for their agency; those that don't attend miss the opportunity to vote, and decisions are not revisited at subsequent meetings. Minutes are detailed and decisions for the next meeting are spelled out on agendas.

GREEN is currently serving primarily as a networking group. Participation is high during work projects and is much lower and spotty when a work product is not produced.

### **Costs, Economics, and Benefits**

The JPA budget for the past several years has averaged about \$2.5 million per year. Funding for the JPA comes from the following sources:

- Disposal site surcharge (\$2 per ton).
- Wood waste tipping fees (\$12 per ton).
- Yard debris tipping fees (\$27 per ton).
- Grants (especially from CIWMB for oil recycling).
- Profit-sharing (with the composting contractor, Sonoma Compost Company).
- Miscellaneous (for example, sale of products and interest on reserved funds).

The disposal site surcharges cover the costs of the JPA's planning, report-writing, countywide education, RMDZ, and household hazardous waste management. The organics tipping fees cover the costs of processing, composting, and marketing various products made from wood waste and yard debris. Grants from the CIWMB subsidize programs focused on used motor oil, used oil filter recycling, and household hazardous waste

education. The current tipping fee for refuse is \$45.20 per ton.

A summary of the JPA's 1999 budget is provided in Table 1:

**Table 1: Sonoma County JPA 1999 Budget**

<b>Program</b>	<b>1999 Budget</b>
Yard debris	\$1,564,903
Wood waste	\$129,706
Education (Education coordinator, recycling guide, eco-desk and library, creative reuse, Small Change Theatre, fairs, Christmas tree recycling)	\$420,937
Planning/reports	\$2,485
RMDZ	\$2,185
Household hazardous waste management	\$949,676
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$3,069,892</b>

The planning/reports cost center includes only the time for preparing the quarterly and annual reports to the CIWMB. This is commonly the amount of budget required for any community to submit such reports to the CIWMB. Therefore, the JPA saves each of its communities \$24,850 annually (10 member agencies x \$2,485 each). Staff time for updating planning documents (for example, the CoIWMP) would be included in this cost center and budgeted at the time for the work to be done.

### **Local Government Challenges and Opportunities**

#### ***Next Steps for Sonoma County***

Beginning in August 1998 and continuing in 1999, the Sonoma County local task force met to discuss future plans and strategies. A strategy of various diversion programs was developed with high, medium, and low priority programs to recommend to the JPA for implementation. The high priority items were formatted into a monthly status report. Implementation of these programs began in 1999.

The County of Sonoma has completed the environmental review process for a number of projects at the central disposal site, including the expansion of the recycling and reuse center, a permanent household hazardous waste collection facility, and a public tipping area. The flow of traffic and the more controlled atmosphere of the planned facility are expected to significantly increase recycling at this site.

The new design will direct all public traffic past the recycling area. Additionally, the more controlled atmosphere of a tipping floor will increase the ability to monitor disposal and allow for floor-sorting of recyclables. Lastly, all landfill users will be weighed and charged based on weight, providing a strong economic incentive to recycle. The county is currently going through the permit process. Construction was scheduled to begin when weather permits in 2000.

The Laguna Waste Water Treatment Plant has begun composting and performing land application of the majority of sludge produced by the facility. This effort is expected to divert approximately 50 tons per day—or 15,000 tons a year—of yard waste from the disposed waste stream used as a bulking agent in this process.

### ***Purpose of a Regional Agency***

Cities and counties are authorized to form “regional agencies” under Public Resources Code section 40970. Regional agencies (RA) are allowed to measure diversion jointly, which in essence averages the diversion among the participating jurisdictions. RAs can report diversion and disposal numbers as one entity instead of by jurisdiction. If jurisdictions find it beneficial to report and measure diversion rate achievement together, then an RA needs to be formed to do so. All roles of the RA and each member jurisdiction should be outlined in an agreement.

### ***How to Become a Regional Agency***

Jurisdictions form an RA by first forming a “joint powers authority” (JPA), as allowed under Government Code section 6500 et seq. If jurisdictions already belong to a JPA for a specific purpose, the existing JPA can be expanded to meet the RA requirements, or an entirely new JPA can be established in order to form an RA. A regional agency can submit annual reports, disposal reports,

and other reporting data as one unit without reporting information for each jurisdiction. Time and money saved on reporting could be redirected toward implementing diversion programs.

The agreement to form the JPA must be approved by the CIWMB and must meet, at a minimum, all of the following provisions to be considered (PRC section 40975):

1. List the member jurisdictions and describe the RA, including the name and address.
2. Describe the method by which any civil penalties imposed by the Board will be allocated among the cities or counties that are members of the RA.
3. Describe a contingency plan that shows how each city or county will comply with the planning and waste diversion requirements in the event that the RA is abolished.
4. Describe the duties and responsibilities of each member jurisdiction demonstrating that the city or county will comply with the planning and waste diversion requirements.
5. Describe the source reduction, recycling, and composting programs to be implemented by the RA. These programs shall be at least as effective in meeting the diversion requirements as those that each city or county has proposed in its current source reduction and recycling element.
6. Any other additional elements as determined to be needed by the jurisdictions that are members of the RA.

### ***What Should be Considered***

#### ***When Becoming a Regional Agency***

Many factors should be considered before becoming a regional agency. Some factors are political and some practical. For example, some cities may want to designate the RA to make political decisions on their behalf. In that case, members should consult with their legal counsels to discuss the costs and benefits and ensure the JPA agreement is written to specifically address the issue. If the members allow the JPA to approve planning documents on their behalf, it could reduce the time needed to prepare and submit plans to the CIWMB by having one local approving body rather than several.

The section of a JPA agreement that is difficult for most jurisdictions to agree on is the section discussing civil penalty allocations. The allocations can be assigned on a pro-rata basis by tonnage or population; however, whatever the jurisdictions agree on must clearly allocate civil penalties in the event the CIWMB imposes a financial penalty.

Also, when forming an RA, it helps to consider all the upcoming contracts for solid waste services that could be negotiated by the RA instead of individual member jurisdictions. Sometimes it is more cost-effective to have one entity manage solid waste projects than to have several smaller entities manage many projects.

Every area that the jurisdictions wish to assign responsibility to the JPA should be explicitly described in the agreement. Provisions should also be made for how to easily modify that scope of work (for example, through an annual budget and work plan process).

### **Tips for Replication**

- Assess your current status under the IWMA and determine if you are meeting the planning, reporting, and diversion requirements.
- Ask your neighboring communities if they are meeting IWMA planning, reporting, and diversion requirements.
- Convene a regional meeting to explore the possibility of working together as a regional agency to decrease costs and increase efficiencies of complying with the IWMA.
- Contact the CIWMB Office of Local Assistance and ask how they would recommend you proceed. Request a sample RA agreement that outlines the types of things that are desired locally.
- Consider using an existing organization or administrative structure to form the regional agency by assuming these additional responsibilities. This could significantly decrease the time it takes for startup.

### **References**

#### ***CIWMB Publications***

Many CIWMB publications are available on the Board's Web site at: [www.ca.gov/Publications/](http://www.ca.gov/Publications/).

To order hard copy publications, call 1-800-CA-Waste (California only) or (916) 341-6306, or write:

California Integrated Waste Management Board  
Public Affairs Office,  
Publications Clearinghouse (MS-6)  
1001 I Street  
P.O. Box 4025 (mailing address)  
Sacramento, CA 95812-4025

### **Contacts**

#### ***CIWMB Contact***

Office of Local Assistance, CIWMB, (916) 341-6199, [cmorgan@ciwmb.ca.gov](mailto:cmorgan@ciwmb.ca.gov).

#### ***Other Contacts***

##### **Board-Approved Regional Agencies:**

Michael Adams, Kings County Waste and Recycling Authority. (559) 583-8829.

Jeff Rawles, Grant Manager, Marin County Hazardous and Solid Waste Management Authority. (415) 449-6528.

Jerry Lawrie, Integrated Waste Management Program Manager, Merced County Solid Waste Regional Agency. (209) 385-7388.

Jill Pahl, Director, Napa Upper Valley Waste Management Authority. (707) 253-4471.

Dan Hosapple, Waste Management Coordinator. San Benito County Regional Agency. (408) 637-3725.

Roger Cummins, County Solid Waste Manager, Siskiyou County Integrated Waste Management Regional Agency. (530) 842-8250.

Ken Wells, Director, Sonoma County Waste Management Authority. (707) 527-3579.

Steve Devine, Executive Director, West Contra Costa Integrated Waste Management Authority. (510) 215-3127.

Keith Martin, General Manager, Yuba/Sutter Regional Waste Management Authority. (916) 634-6890.

### **Additional Contacts**

Paul Vossen, University of California Cooperative Extension. (707) 565-2621. Susan Richter, Bay Area Creative Re-Use. (707) 546-3340.

Pavitra Crimmel, Beyond Waste. (707) 792-2555.

Marsha Sue Lustig, City of Cotati. (707) 665-3621. Kelly Keogh, Empire Waste Management. (707) 585-0291.

Ken Foley, Larry's Sanitation. (707) 586-7759.

Richard Johnson, West Sonoma County Disposal. (707) 765-6424.

John Currato, Sonoma Garbage Collectors. (707) 996-7555.

Chuck Doty, Sonoma-Mendocino-Lake RMDZ. (707) 262-1090.

### **Credits and Disclaimer**

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**The energy challenge facing California is real. Every Californian needs to take immediate action to reduce energy consumption. For a list of simple ways you can reduce demand and cut your energy costs, see our Web site at [www.ciwmb.ca.gov](http://www.ciwmb.ca.gov).**