



## RESOURCE RECOVERY COALITION OF CALIFORNIA

FEBRUARY 2021

On behalf of the Resource Recovery Coalition of California, it is my honor to welcome Governor Newsom, our statewide officers, and new and returning members of the Legislature to the beginning of the 2021-2022 Legislative Session.

Resource Recovery Coalition members are collection and recycling companies that operate throughout the State. As essential service providers during the COVID-19 pandemic, our members continue to serve and protect the health and safety of our local communities by processing municipal solid waste and keeping our streets clean.

Last year was tremendously challenging, and had a direct fiscal impact on the waste and recycling industry as numerous local business closures caused a decrease in commercial waste and recycling volumes. Meanwhile, our cities and counties face substantial budget deficits at a time when they are preparing to meet new organic material recycling mandates that begin in 2022.

Many challenges lie ahead as we work to build the necessary infrastructure to comply with California's waste recycling mandates, and to strengthen our circular economy to better manage the materials we generate.

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CalRecycle estimates that meeting our organic material recycling obligations alone will cost upwards of \$10 billion by 2030. Without tangible investment in domestic infrastructure and markets, we continue to jeopardize California's waste diversion goals and mandates.

Additionally, exciting developments in battery electric vehicle (BEV) technology mean the industry is looking to transition to zero emission vehicles. However, heavy-duty BEV technology is in its naissant and not yet capable of meeting current operating standards. Furthermore, the charging infrastructure required to power a heavy-duty BEV fleet is enormous and the costs and technical limitations are not fully understood. The unreliability of the electrical grid, especially during public safety power shutoff events, further complicates this transition.

Finally, as we look to divert our organic material from the landfill and manage much of this material in anaerobic digestion facilities

that produce renewable biogas, it is critical we have a transition plan that supports this development and incorporates in-state renewable biogas use into our long term Climate Change Scoping Plans.

We are in challenging times, but California always perseveres. We are deeply encouraged by the work of the COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force Working Group in seeking to equitably distribute and administer the COVID-19 vaccine across all industries and sectors.

Good luck this year, and thank you! We look forward to partnering with you to achieve our mutual goals and to strengthen the resiliency of California's waste and recycling system. Our coalition members and staff always welcome opportunities to collaborate on meeting our shared state goals. Please do not hesitate to reach out.

**Bill Dobert**  
PRESIDENT



The Resource Recovery Coalition of California (Resource Coalition) was founded almost 60 years ago by collection and recycling companies that now operate in over 50 cities and counties throughout California. Many of our members are third, fourth, or fifth generation family owners who live in the communities they serve. The solid waste and recycling industry impacts every single resident and employee in a community, and because our members are part of that same community, they are committed to being excellent service providers and environmental stewards, as well as to bolstering the local economy by creating more jobs through recycling.

The solid waste and recycling industry has evolved considerably over the last several decades, and our members have been at the forefront of that evolution. They don't just collect garbage. Together with their cities and counties, they have invested in innovative technologies and processes to prevent recyclable and organic materials from going to the landfill and using them instead to create new products, compost for agriculture, renewable energy, and low-emission renewable gas. This reduces litter, pollution, and greenhouse gas emissions that create poor air quality in their communities. Never have these values and commitment to finding new and better ways to reduce waste and manage our resources been more important than they are now as we recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

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Our members are critical essential service providers and have been integral to helping California through the COVID-19 crisis. Over the last year, they maintained jobs during a time of unprecedented unemployment, provided a much needed sense of normalcy to residents by continuing their routes through the community, and prevented an additional public health and safety hazard that would have been caused by uncollected garbage. And, they did this all while experiencing their own significant financial and operational challenges.

Now, as we begin to emerge this year from the immediate crisis, our members are focused on how to use what we've learned as we recover from the pandemic and beyond. Maintaining high quality services and increasing recycling while keeping costs to ratepayers as low as possible remains our priority. The pandemic emphasized that we need to rethink recycling and focus on a true circular economy, especially as it relates to single-use plastics. Real recycling happens long before material gets thrown out at the curb. It's an all hands on deck approach that involves everyone down the line from designers and manufacturers who create products, to consumers who buy them, and to our members who collect and recycle them. We can develop a circular economy by:

- Creating products out of materials that are truly recyclable.
- Developing robust domestic markets for recycled content by using recycled material, rather than new plastics, to make new products.
- Educating consumers on the recyclability of the products they buy and the importance of properly separating materials at the curb.
- Investing in recycling infrastructure to get the cleanest and most usable recycled material possible for remanufacturing.



**RESOURCE RECOVERY**  
COALITION OF CALIFORNIA

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Additionally, a circular economy will be key to successfully implementing California's organic material recycling mandate under SB 1383 (Lara, 2016). Rather than let organic material break down uncontrolled in a landfill releasing harmful greenhouse gases into our communities, we can recycle it into sustainable, renewable products like compost, energy, and fuel. While building the programs and infrastructure necessary to implement this mandate will be a huge lift, it also presents an opportunity to achieve our waste diversion and climate goals while also creating recycling jobs that will support our local governments through the pandemic recovery. The investment will be great, and we must spread the responsibility and costs among everyone so the burden does not fall squarely on already financially strapped local governments and ratepaying residents.

California is resilient. Together we can emerge from the pandemic stronger than before. The Resource Coalition is committed to continuing our responsibilities as essential service providers and to bettering recycling and the environmental health of our communities.

**A**t the Resource Recovery Coalition of California, we continually strive to make sure that Californians know about the great work done by our member companies. This year in particular, with the COVID-19 pandemic, we produced an aggressive digital campaign to highlight the work being done by our essential workers (never a week off!), and the importance of our recycling efforts and innovation to create a more beautiful, sustainable and safe California.

To date, over 893,000 people have seen our RRCC messages that have produced over 48,000 interactions (likes, comments, shares, RTs) on social media platforms. We are proud that every day more and more people are becoming aware of the Coalition, our work and our vision for the future. We invite you all to follow us on our social media channels at:

**FACEBOOK:** @ResourceCoalitionCA

**TWITTER:** @ResCoalitionCA

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# RESOURCE RECOVERY COALITION OF CALIFORNIA



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