



Administrative Report

H.21., File # 20-1489

Meeting Date: 10/20/2020

To: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
From: TED SEMAAN, PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR

TITLE

APPROVE THE RESPONSE LETTER TO THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY GRAND JURY'S REPORT ENTITLED "A DIET FOR LANDFILLS: CUTTING DOWN ON FOOD WASTE."

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Los Angeles County Civil Grand Jury released a report in July entitled "A Diet for Landfills: Cutting Down on Food Waste" and asked local jurisdictions for responses to a number of suggested programs and actions designed to improve organics recycling. The responses are due to the Los Angeles County Civil Grand Jury by October 30, 2020. The Public Works Department has drafted a response letter to the report and is recommending Council's approval of these responses prior to submitting them to the Grand Jury.

BACKGROUND

In the State of California, civil grand juries are authorized to "investigate and report upon the operations, accounts, and records of the officers, department, functions, and the method or system of performing the duties of any such city or joint powers agency and make such recommendations as it may deem proper and fit." (Cal. Penal Code 925(a)).

On July 31, 2020, the Los Angeles County Grand Jury (Grand Jury) issued the report entitled "A Diet for Landfills: Cutting Down on Food Waste" (Report). In the Report, the Grand Jury identified several opportunities for supportive public policies that can incentivize and create avenues to increase food waste recycling and organic waste diversion rates. At the conclusion of the Report, the Grand Jury requested a response from the eighty-eight Mayor's within Los Angeles County to recommendations 1.1, 1.3, 1.8, and 1.14 of the report.

Within 90 days after a Grand Jury's issuance of the Report, the City Council must comment to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court on the conclusions and recommendations contained in the report. The attached response letter addresses the Grand Jury's recommendations.

The City's response to the Grand Jury report references the many efforts the City is making to increase organics recycling. The report suggested such things as: implementing a mandatory organic recycling ordinance, monitoring of organics recycling service and tonnage, increased education, and changes to waste franchise agreements to improve organics recycling. The City is currently

implementing many of these recommendations that were codified in the amendment to the franchise agreement with Athens Services in 2019 (e.g., monitoring service, education, tonnage reports, and outreach) and is in progress on others. For instance, the City is taking steps to prepare a mandatory organics ordinance for City Council consideration. Furthermore, the City is working with Athens Services to ensure compliance with the State organic waste mandates outlined in AB1826, SB1383 and AB827, which will require all customers to subscribe to organics service in 2022. Currently the City provides curbside organics service to both residential and commercial customers and City Staff is working with Athens Services to enroll both residential and commercial customers in the service. The only section of the report that the City disagrees with is establishing a weekly food waste drop off center. The City believes that the established program of curbside organic service makes this recommendation unnecessary to accomplish food waste diversion.

If the City Council approves the response letter, the City will submit it to the Grand Jury and continue with its efforts to implement a comprehensive organics recycling program. This will include continued collaboration with the County, CalRecycle and Athens Services to implement the programs necessary to achieve this goal. It is unclear which programs and recommendations Los Angeles County will adopt, and what authority, if any, the County has over the Cities within the County. Therefore, it is unclear what the fiscal impact would be, if any, if certain recommendations are adopted.

COORDINATION

The City Attorney's Office reviewed the response letter prepared by the Public Works Department.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with this action.

APPROVED BY:

Joe Hoefgen, City Manager

ATTACHMENTS

Response Letter