



California Coastal Coalition
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MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of the Ocean Protection Council

FROM: Steve Aceti

DATE: June 3, 2005

RE: Local Government Efforts to Reduce Marine Litter/Debris

I am the executive director of the California Coastal Coalition, (www.calcoast.org), an advocacy organization comprised of coastal cities and counties, and I submit this memorandum to apprise the Ocean Protection Council (the Council) of programs that are being developed by local governments, NGO's and the plastics industry to reduce the amount of litter and debris that is reaching the coast and ocean. This memorandum will also discuss ways in which the Council could assist local efforts in dealing with marine debris.

Roughly one year ago, Governor Schwarzenegger unveiled an ocean protection plan, saying "[t]he oceans are in trouble and in need of help." Former Rep. Leon Panetta told the Ocean Protection Council (OPC) at its inaugural meeting in March that marine debris and litter are among the threats to the state's ocean and coast.

Each year, coastal communities participate in "California Coastal Cleanup Day" to remove trash and debris from roadsides, parks, bays, shorelines, rivers, creeks and beaches. Last year, more than 46,000 volunteers collected nearly 650,000 pounds of trash and debris up and down the coast. Some communities engage in cleanups on a regular basis, but a more comprehensive approach is needed to reduce the threat to our coast.

Several CalCoast local government members have created task forces or work groups to reduce marine debris and litter through a variety of means. These efforts can serve as models for other communities along the coast.

CalCoast is an advocacy organization comprised of coastal communities and interest groups

www.calcoast.org

1. Orange County

Last November, the Orange County Stormwater Program formed a Trash and Debris Task Force comprising the following organizations: Earth Resource Foundation, California Plastics Industry Coalition, CalTrans District 12, Rainbow Disposal, Surfrider Foundation, Trails4All, Waste Management, Inc., The Irvine Company, the Irvine Ranch Water District, the cities of Anaheim, Buena Park, Huntington Beach, Irvine, Laguna Beach, Laguna Niguel, Newport Beach, San Juan Capistrano, and San Clemente, the County's Integrated Waste Management Department and the County's Resources & Development Management Department. The Task Force has been formed to develop and implement a regional coordinated strategy to eliminate litter and to prevent trash and debris from entering our waterways and ending up in the ocean.

Also in Orange County, the American Plastics Council is currently working jointly with Keep California Beautiful (KCB), the state's leading anti-litter organization to distribute - at APC expense - a comprehensive anti-litter tool kit for city officials throughout Orange County. The tool kit includes a ready to air television public service announcement to encourage citizens not to litter, information on grant programs and resources to conduct recycling, cleanup and other beautification projects.

2. San Diego County

Recently, San Diego County agreed to create a task force using the Orange County model. A resolution creating the task force will be presented to the County Board of Supervisors soon.

3. Los Angeles County

To assist local governments in the Los Angeles region in meeting their water quality requirements under the Clean Water Act, the plastics industry has funded a research effort aimed at reviewing potential market based (credit-trading) policy options for compliance with trash TMDL rules and regulations. The zero-trash TMDL was adopted by the Los Angeles regional water quality control board. This project, called "Market Based Solutions for Achieving the Trash TMDL in the L.A. Watershed," is designed to function in a collaborative manner with participation from both public and private entities and provide Los Angeles with options to both reducing litter and sources of water quality pollution. Findings from this project are due to be released this summer.

4. City of Laguna Beach

This past April, the City of Laguna Beach, in partnership with the Laguna Beach Chamber of Commerce, the Ocean Laguna Foundation, Waste Management, the California Restaurant Association and the California Plastics Coalition, created a work group to reduce marine litter and debris through education, trash removal and recycling. Some of the approaches being considered by the group include the installation of debris catch basins, voluntary use of alternative packaging, signage on the beach, receptacles that prevent trash from being blown around or scavenged by birds, beach cleanups by

the California Conservation Corps, public service announcements, and curbside recycling.

This is just a sampling of what is being done by coastal communities to reduce marine debris and litter. Some cities and counties are fully engaged in the process and many communities are interested in developing programs, but they are starting from scratch because they are not aware of what programs and management practices are available. The Council and/or other State agencies, with help from the private sector, could assist local efforts in the following ways:

1. Coordinate state and local efforts to reduce marine debris and litter;
2. Develop standardized beach signage that coastal communities could erect to educate the public about the need to dispose of cans, bottles, food containers and other materials properly;
3. Develop brochures for distribution at tourism kiosks, hotels, restaurants and other businesses to educate locals and visitors about proper disposal practices;
4. Develop school materials on this subject;
5. Produce public service announcements for television, newspapers, magazines and other media;
6. Provide local assistance for coastal communities to install catch basins and state-of-the-art trash receptacles.

Marine debris and trash is a serious problem that can best be solved through an active partnership among coastal communities, State government and the private sector.