

November 10, 2012

Dear Councilmembers,

The waste and recycling system serving LA's apartments and businesses is broken: too much waste is going to landfills, our streets are choked with too many diesel-spewing trucks, and there's scant accountability to the City's ambitious Zero Waste goals. Our landfills are reaching capacity while too many renters and businesses can't recycle – leading to the development of costly "alternatives" like transporting our waste by rail to the desert, or waste-to-energy. Low-road haulers skirt environmental standards with no accountability. Inefficient, overlapping truck routes pollute our air and destroy our streets. We are throwing too much away: recyclables, good green jobs, and clean air.

This system is broken, and an exclusive franchise system is the solution.

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, lead 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,

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