



DAVID E. RYU
COUNCILMEMBER, FOURTH DISTRICT

Date: 2-6-18
Submitted in ECCEJ Committee
Council File No: 17-0878-S1, 243
Item No. 1
~~Deputy:~~ CM Ryu

February 6, 2018

Councilmember Nury Martinez
Chair, Energy, Climate Change and Environmental Justice Committee
200 North Spring Street, Room 470
Los Angeles, CA. 90012

RE: Addendum to the letter regarding RecycLA sent to Mr. Enrique Zaldivar, November 21, 2017.

Dear Ms. Martinez and Committee Members,

Thank you for scheduling this matter in your committee and for your attention and commitment to remedying the City's RecycLA program, the intent of which has been clouded by a rollout that has been inconsistent at best, and for many residents and business owners in Council District Four, an utter disappointment.

Constituents in my district have reported egregious price-gouging for the most basic services. Others simply are not receiving waste removal services, and are instead coping with growing heaps of trash on their properties.

I would like to respectfully request that the Committee instruct the Bureau of Sanitation to report back to Council with the following information:

First, it is my understanding that a significant amount of confusion has arisen from the unanticipated creation of new accounts, formerly unregistered or unaccounted for.

- Please provide an accounting of the number of newly created accounts, the size of those accounts, any additional service or facilities costs that may be incurred by the City or its haulers to meet the additional demand.

Second, many Council District Four residents have seen the addition and/or increase of service fees attached to seemingly basic functions such as the opening of locked or closed gates by use of an electronic device, accessing an intercom or security office, or collecting a bin that is more than 100 feet from a collection point, et al. The residents of Los Angeles deserve an evaluation and explanation of these fees.

- Please provide a list of services currently being charged by waste haulers.
- What proportion of property owner's monthly waste hauling bills are comprised of additional service fees?

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- Which of the currently provided services are necessary to ensure the success of the program and which services could be deemed unnecessary?
- How are fees disputes currently handled, and what authority do Bureau of Sanitation ambassadors have to negotiate contested service fees and/or contracts?

Finally, while the goal of increasing recycling is laudable, I have very real concerns about the long-term viability of the program. In order to incentivize recycling, the City has developed a structure in which "blue bin" services are free and "black bin" services are charged at an increased rate, contingent upon their size and frequency of collections. As residents increase their recycling and decrease the amount of refuse sent to landfills, waste removal fees collected by trash haulers will decrease, making the cost of doing business increasingly untenable. The result is the use of service fees to bolster an operator's bottom line or the haulers discouraging recycling, which my office has already seen.

- Please provide an explanation and thorough assessment of the long-term viability and cost stability of the program.
- Based on the current program structure, what, if any, additional costs can the City, its RecycLA service providers, property or business owners expect to incur in future years?

The responsibility of providing efficient and equitable waste removal services lies with the Bureau of Sanitation, and if it can't ensure the most basic of services at a reasonable price, then we certainly should not expect RecycLA to meet its more aspirational goals. I urge the Bureau of Sanitation to address the breakdowns of RecycLA immediately, to reform this program and its execution by the waste haulers, and to restore fair pricing and reliable service to residents and businesses across Los Angeles.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and I look forward to working with your office and the committee to come to a swift resolution.

Sincerely,



David E. Ryu
Councilmember, District Four



DAVID E. RYU
COUNCILMEMBER, FOURTH DISTRICT

November 21, 2017

Enrique C. Zaldivar, Director, Bureau of Sanitation
1149 S. Broadway Street, Suite 900
Los Angeles, CA 90015

RE: RecycLA Program

Dear Mr. Zaldivar,

I am writing in regards to the implementation of the new waste removal program, "RecycLA," which aims to reform the way the City provides waste services to businesses and multi-family residential buildings in the City of Los Angeles.

Encouraging residents and business owners to recycle, diverting 97 percent of our City's waste from landfills over the next 13 years, creating transparency and reliability in pricing, and enhancing customer service, are standards that should be expectations for Angelenos. However, the program's intent has been severely clouded by a rollout that has been inconsistent at best, and in the case of many residents and business owners in my district, an utter disappointment.

Constituents of Council District Four report egregious price-gouging for the most basic of services, and costs for waste removal services that are so high they would be laughable if they weren't crippling small businesses across my district. Others are simply not receiving waste removal services, and are instead coping with growing heaps of trash on their properties.

The foremost concern for many residents in Council District Four has been the addition and/or increase of service fees attached to seemingly basic functions, such as the opening of locked or closed gates by use of an electronic device, accessing an intercom or security office, or collecting a bin that is more than 100 feet from a collection point. Charging exorbitant fees for simple tasks included in the basic function of hauling waste is not what residents expect from their City's waste removal service and certainly not what the City of Los Angeles anticipated when entering into this contract with the waste haulers.



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While it is understandable that some small charges, agreed upon during a waste assessment, may be asked of customers in particular cases, reports from constituents in Council District Four reveal that this is not the case. Business owners and building managers who took every step asked of them to negotiate a reasonable cost for waste removal service are surprised with arbitrary fees that are unnecessary and unfair.

To address these concerns, I ask that the Bureau of Sanitation implement a streamlined process to handle fee disputes, and err on the side of residents and business owners who cannot and should not be expected to pay fees for something as simple as opening a gate with an electronic device.

Above all else, it is the Bureau's responsibility to provide waste removal service from homes, buildings and businesses in a timely manner at a reasonable cost. I hope that, among the other goals of RecycLA and interests of the waste haulers, this remains the priority.

I remain a strong advocate for a more sustainable City. Incentivizing recycling, as well as reducing our carbon emissions with the cleaner vehicles mandated by RecycLA, are two significant steps to making this possible. I share these goals of RecycLA, and hope that, with the best efforts of the Bureau and good faith of the waste haulers, they will be realized soon.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and I look forward to your response.

David E. Ryu
Councilmember, 4th District

Cc: Nury Martinez, Councilmember, 6th District
Greg Good, Office of the Mayor
Kevin James, President, Board of Public Works
Heather Repenning, Vice President, Board of Public Works
Domingo Orosco, Los Angeles Department of Sanitation