



Teamsters Local Union No. 396
Package and General Utility Drivers
Affiliated with the
INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF TEAMSTERS

September 28, 2023

SENT VIA EMAIL

Councilmember Katy Yaroslavsky, Chair
Councilmember Tim McOsker
Councilmember Nithya Raman
Councilmember Bob Blumenfield
Councilmember Eunisses Hernandez
Los Angeles City Council Energy and Environment Committee
200 N. Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: Future of recycLA

Dear Committee Members,

Teamsters Local 396 represents more than 3,000 private sector waste and recycling workers throughout the region, including many of those who have been diligently servicing the City's commercial and multi-family sector for the past seven years under the recycLA program. We were proud to join with city officials, community leaders, climate change activists, and environmental justice advocates to help develop and implement this program from its earliest inception. We are also proud of its many successes in the ensuing years since its roll out.

In considering the future of this program, let's not forget the disastrous state of the City's commercial waste and recycling system that existed before this program came into being, and the reasons this program was adopted in the first place. From out-of-control truck traffic, inefficient routing, unregulated scofflaw haulers, to the impending State mandated diversion requirements, it was clear at the time that the City needed to take back control over this state of affairs, and finally introduce justice, equity and common sense into our commercial waste and recycling system.

Let's also not forget some of the many successes that the program has brought to the City and its residents. From decreased truck traffic and diesel pollution, to the extremely successful food recovery program, to increases in diversion and recycling, to higher environmental and labor standards at the transfer and recycling facilities throughout the City, it is clear that the state of the City's waste and recycling system is far better off now than it was prior to the roll-out of recycLA. There is even an argument to be made that the much-publicized customer rate increases would be far worse had recycLA not been implemented, and customers were completely at the mercy of unscrupulous haulers charging whatever they want for these mandated services.

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Of course, the recycLA program has not been perfect, and a lot has changed over the past seven years, from the near collapse of the international recycling market, to the State's roll-out of its organics diversion mandates, to recent legal challenges to waste franchise fees throughout the State. However, perhaps the most attractive feature of this program is its capacity to adapt to changing conditions, and the City's ability to maintain control over pricing, routing, diversion programs, service standards, and practically every other aspect of commercial waste and recycling.

We therefore strongly support the continuation and strengthening of this program and urge this committee to adopt either Option 2 or Option 3 of the Bureau's report. We believe that either of these two options would best allow the City to adopt the necessary changes to the program, and further strengthen and modernize our commercial waste and recycling system.

We look forward to staying engaged in this process and working with the City and other stakeholders to continue to improve and update the City's recycLA program moving forward.

Respectfully,

Victor Mineros

Secretary-Treasurer

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