

Letter from California: Recycling initiative seeks input

resource-recycling.com/recycling/2020/08/11/letter-from-california-recycling-initiative-seeks-input

Heidi Sanborn, National Stewardship Action Council

August 11, 2020

In 2019, California Gov. Gavin Newsom signed into law The California Recycling Market Development Act by Assemblymember Susan Eggman ([AB 1583](#)), which in part requires the California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle) to convene a [Statewide Commission on Recycling Markets and Curbside Recycling](#) consisting of representatives of public agencies, private solid waste enterprises and environmental organizations that have expertise in recycling.

You might ask why this California commission is important to the nation. It's important because California is 12% of the U.S. market and, as is often said, as California goes, so goes the nation. We share virtually the same problems in waste and recycling that are being experienced across the country, have virtually the same products sold into our markets that become waste, and the same companies managing them using the same technologies and equipment. If California can take input from a broad number of stakeholders, we might be able to identify targeted solutions that would work anywhere in the nation. That is why we need your input and help.

The 17-member commission has been appointed by the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA), and I was elected by the commissioners to chair the commission. All stakeholders from across the country are encouraged to follow the work of the commission and are invited to submit public comments.



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The commission created four committees: Labeling and Public Education, Recycling, Market Development, and Organics.

The first meeting of these committees will be when they determine what their “scope” will be and what their priorities will be to address the many problems we face in each area of discussion. They are all public and webcast so anyone anywhere can watch and submit comments live under each agenda item. On Friday, July 31, the Labeling and Recycling Committees met, and meetings on Aug. 3 included the Market Development and Organics committees. The commission discussed doing most of the detailed work in the committee meetings and bringing recommendations to the commission for discussion and adoption in

time to complete our report of our recommendations to the legislature and CalEPA by Jan. 1, 2021.

If you are interested in helping California craft solutions that can work nationally, please follow the commission work by signing up for automatic notices through the commission [listserv](#) hosted by CalRecycle. Also, we encourage you to submit public comments. Please use the [portal](#) and then use the workshop link from the drop-down menu. Sending email comments will take longer to make public and slow down the work of the commission, so please submit all comments through the portal so we can move quickly and ensure public noticing laws are obeyed and we are as transparent as possible. If you wish to submit long and detailed ideas, please submit a summary in the portal and a very detailed proposal – as detailed as you wish – via email.

Our industry is in trouble on a lot of levels. Because of that, we need everyone to share ideas and data that are as honest and detailed as they would like, so we can work together to take the tension we all feel and turn it into a breakthrough. We can and must do that, and as chair of the commission, I will do my very best to collaborate with all 17 commissioners to ensure this process has integrity, transparency and results in timely, thoughtful consensus recommendations to CalEPA and our state legislature by Jan. 1, 2021. We encourage you, and need you, to help us achieve those goals. Let's do this!

Heidi Sanborn is executive director of the [National Stewardship Action Council](#) and chair of California's Statewide Commission on Recycling Markets and Curbside Recycling.

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