



"Reduce – Reuse – Recycle"

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Acting Locally on Climate Change

Many people are aware that carbon dioxide (CO₂) is one of the primary greenhouse gases (GHG) that contributes to global climate change. However, another GHG that significantly contributes to global climate change is methane. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), methane is up to 36 times more effective than CO₂ at trapping heat in the Earth's atmosphere; and landfills are the 3rd largest sources of human-related methane emissions in the U.S. The reason landfills generate methane gas is because organic waste, such as yard clippings, food scraps and food-soiled paper undergo the process of anaerobic decomposition after they are buried in the landfill. Consequently, reducing the amount of organic materials sent to landfills directly reduces the production of methane gas.

The California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle) estimates that California sends approximately 30 million tons of waste to landfills each year! More than one-third of that waste is organic material that could be recycled through composting and mulching, or used to produce renewable energy and fuel through anaerobic digestion. To achieve statewide GHG emission reduction and waste diversion goals, California adopted Assembly Bill 1826 (AB 1826), Mandatory Commercial Organics Recycling. AB 1826 requires businesses, including multifamily complexes and public entities to implement organic waste recycling programs. The law phases in the requirements for businesses depending on the amount of organic waste they generate on a weekly basis. As of January 2017, businesses that generate 4 cubic yards of organic waste per week and multi-family complexes that consist of 5 or more units are required to separate and recycle organic materials. Multi-family complexes are not required to recycle food waste under AB 1826, only yard waste. By 2019, businesses producing 4 cubic yards or more of garbage per week will be required to recycle their organic waste.

Currently in the Salinas Valley, waste collection companies such as Republic Services of Salinas (Republic Services), Tri-Cities Disposal and Recycling (Tri-Cities) and Waste Management offer yard waste collection in their service areas; however, Republic Services is the only waste hauler that currently offers food waste collection service. There is a fee for food waste collection service, but it is a lower rate than regular garbage service, so many businesses in Salinas can reduce their trash service and potentially decrease their overall waste collection costs.

While food waste collection services are not yet available to businesses in South County, Salinas Valley Recycles plans to expand the composting facility at Johnson Canyon Landfill to accept food waste by mid-2018 (tentatively). Once the expansion is complete, Tri-Cities and Waste Management will offer food waste collection services to their business customers. However, until a regional food waste recycling program is available, Salinas Valley Recycles can conduct a free waste assessment at your business, multi-family complex or school to identify other ways to divert your food waste from the landfill, such as donating edible food or implementing food waste prevention/reduction practices. Salinas Valley Recycles



also offers free composting workshops to teach small businesses, schools and residents how to start their own [on-site] composting program. To learn more about AB 1826 compliance, yard waste recycling, composting, and how to support the development of local composting infrastructure, visit SalinasValleyRecycles.com or CalRecycle's website at www.calrecycle.ca.gov/recycle/commercial/organics/. When we work together to reduce food waste in the Salinas Valley, we help the world reduce climate change!

