

ACTION 30

Reduce trash input into the Estuary

Assist regional municipalities and agencies in attaining trash reduction objectives by assisting in source reduction activities, such as extended producer responsibility strategies that can reduce trash before it reaches the Estuary, and by highlighting trash reduction rates in the *State of the Estuary Report* when trash-tracking metrics are agreed upon by Bay Area stakeholders.

TASK 30-1 Partner with municipalities, counties, pollution prevention organizations, and other stakeholders to research and implement effective extended producer responsibility (EPR) strategies for food and beverage packaging in the Estuary. Highlight successful strategies and develop recommendations for regional and well as local approaches.

BY 2020 Implement four new EPR ordinances or other strategies based on recommendations.

TASK 30-2 Review trash reduction tracking metrics, currently being developed by Bay Area stormwater permittees, for use in the next *State of the Estuary Report*.

BY 2021 Include assessments of trash reduction in San Francisco Bay and its watersheds in next report.

BACKGROUND

Trash is a serious problem in the urbanized Estuary. Every year 1.36 million gallons of trash flows into San Francisco Bay and its creeks from storm drains. Plastic makes up approximately 49 percent of the trash; followed by paper products (bags, newspapers, receipts) at 21 percent, beverage containers and miscellaneous items (including cigarette butts) at 15 percent, single-use plastic bags at approximately eight percent, and polystyrene foam at seven percent.

Trash is one of the easiest pollutants to see but one of the most difficult to measure, which creates challenges for developing accurate and feasible tracking methods. The development of a trash reduction indicator for the *State of the Estuary Report* will rely on standards developed for the state and regional water boards, and other vetted methodologies. Once adopted, the State Water Resources Control Board's statewide policy for trash control will also guide this action.

The current Municipal Regional Stormwater Permit requires municipalities and local agencies in Alameda, Contra Costa, San Mateo, and Santa Clara counties, and the cities of Fairfield, Suisun City, and Vallejo, to meet the goal of 100 percent trash load reduction or no adverse impact to receiving waters from trash by July 1, 2022. All other Bay Area and Delta municipalities are covered by Trash Amendments adopted by the State Water Resources Control Board in 2015.

In recent years, cities and counties around the Estuary have passed a number of ordinances banning plastic bags, polystyrene, and other items commonly found in the region's waterways. Extended producer responsibility (EPR) ordinances and legislation, which require waste product producers to take responsibility for treating or disposing of the trash produced at the end of a product's use, are gaining momentum. Take-back programs are one effective EPR strategy.

Food and beverage packaging from grocery stores and restaurants, and other materials made from plastic, are the most frequently occurring forms of trash in the region's waterways, and therefore should be prioritized in EPR strategies for the Estuary. Because so much of this packaging is made of plastic, these efforts may also help reduce the rising problem of microplastics identified as an emerging concern in San Francisco Bay and the nearby ocean.

This CCMP action supports filling critical gaps in the battle to reduce trash impacts on the Estuary and regional quality of life.

OWNERS

SF Estuary Partnership (Tasks 30-1, 30-2)

COLLABORATING PARTNERS

Bay Area Pollution Prevention Group, Bay Area Stormwater Management Agencies Association, SF Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board, Save the Bay, US Environmental Protection Agency, various municipalities

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