

GREEN BUSINESS BENCHMARKING STUDY

February 21, 2017

PROMOTING GREEN BUSINESS

Local governments promote green business practices in order to improve human health and the environment while supporting economic development. The most common approach to advancing green business has been to create and adopt a formal city or county Green Business Program (GBP). Dozens of local governments in California operate GBPs, many of them in conjunction with the California Green Business Network (CAGBN), and some on their own, independently.

This document provides an overview of how California local governments promote green business, including best practices observed from internet research and interviews.

GREEN BUSINESS PROGRAMS: MISSIONS, STRUCTURE, CHARACTERISTICS

GBPs around California share many of the same characteristics. They are typically run at the city or county level, implemented by either government staff or a contracting firm, with a goal of:

- Enhancing the quality of life for residents and workers,
- Increasing environmental sustainability, and
- Supporting local business development.

GBPs help businesses comply with environmental regulations, take advantage of utility rebates and financial incentives, and access educational materials, among other things. A common structure can also be seen across GBPs. They focus on:

- Evaluating a business' operating practices against a set of environmental criteria,
- Helping the business implement new practices in order to meet an adopted standard,
- Certifying the business as "green," and
- Promoting the business through the GBP network or by providing marketing materials for the companies to use.

Many GBPs provide these services to businesses for free, yet some charge fees that supplement program funding.

GBP standards usually focus on energy and water conservation and efficiency, waste reduction, sustainable procurement, and pollution prevention. Sets of standards differ based on business sectors. For instance, hotels, automotive repair shops, restaurants, and garment cleaners each have a unique checklist to go through for certification.¹

¹ The City and County of San Francisco shares its standards on their website. See <http://sfgreenbusiness.org/Green-Your-Business/Program-Standards/>. An example of office/retail standards is attached in Appendix A.

These programs are voluntary and therefore rely on business support for their success. Businesses may participate in a GBP for a variety of reasons: assistance with environmental compliance, utility bill cost savings, advertising opportunities, or moral conviction. Simply meeting regulatory requirements can be challenging; going beyond can be extremely challenging depending on the industry.

CITIES AND COUNTIES IN CALIFORNIA WITH GBPs

Over two dozen cities and counties - such as the City of Los Angeles, the City of Santa Monica, Santa Barbara County, and Alameda County - operate their GBPs as part of the CAGBN, a nonprofit organization funded by local government contributions, utilities, and other agency partners.² Many more cities, like San Diego, Long Beach, and Oceanside, manage programs independently.

GBPs appear to differ more in sophistication than in approach. Long-standing and well-supported programs like San Francisco's go beyond providing green certification; these programs have newsletters, circulate job postings, create searchable green business directories, publish materials in multiple languages, and engage in social media. Less established or smaller programs may focus on a small number of sectors, use the CAGBN website rather than their own, and limit the number of certifications it can do based on budgets.

OTHER GREEN BUSINESS ACTIVITIES

Local governments also advance green business through means other than GBPs, such as adopting increasingly stringent environmental regulations and legislation, promoting utility energy rebates through chambers of commerce, or establishing a city sustainability office. GBPs should be seen as one of many tools available to local governments. They are an effective interface for local businesses to engage with the city and understand, access, and be motivated to use environmental services, many of which may already exist.

GBP BEST PRACTICES

In reviewing California GBPs and speaking with several GBP program managers, the following best practices were observed:

- **Take advantage of existing GBP resources.**³ GBPs in California have existed for decades so ready-to-use tools and materials should be leveraged. The CAGBN provides its members access to a robust and rigorous database of standards as well as methods to

² A full list of CAGBN cities and county members is attached in Appendix B.

³ The CAGBN does require members to pay startup costs and annual membership dues. Dues are determined on a sliding scale and are anticipated to be in the low thousands of dollars for a city of Commerce's size. One-time startup costs can be more expensive than annual dues and range based on the amount of training needed to get a new city's staff up to speed, among other things.

calculate cost-savings and impacts. Creating and maintaining a database independently would be a costly undertaking, particularly for a small city. In addition, CAGBP members share marketing materials, such as flyers, newsletters, case studies, and public service promotional videos, which provide a foundation for development of a unique communication plan. Finally, GBP managers mentioned the “comradery” between GBP members as being invaluable. For example, members can message each other through a shared app to ask questions and receive responses quickly. Utilization of the network can reduce staffing requirements in the city.

- **Identify program priorities and use those to plan a GBP build-out.** Sophisticated GBPs like San Francisco’s cater to numerous business sectors in multiple languages. Some host awards luncheons and dinners, organize educational workshops, and require third party verification for green certification rather than going by the honors system. While a long-term plan may be to grow a highly customized program with many offerings, GBPs can be expanded on over time, and initial efforts should focus on high impact activities. Funding sources - whether it be through state or federal grants, utility or agency partner contributions, or participating business fees - need to be continuous and sufficient to prevent budget issues that result in negative experiences for program participants.
- **Create or leverage local agency resources and partnerships.** Strong programs establish multiple agency, government, and utility partnerships. Cities with existing sustainability forums may use or improve upon those as the basis for a GBP network. Alternatively, local governments can use GBPs to coordinate sustainability work that either exists or will exist between internal agencies. Finally, some cities may start anew and create links between agencies that can not only serve the GBP, but also other environmental initiatives. For Commerce, any environmental forums that might exist through organizations such as the Industrial Council should be looked at and leveraged.
- **Design staffing after assessing existing resources and defining program goals.** In order to launch a successful program, a city should have a clear understanding of its resources and define realistic goals and priorities. After that, the city can determine how to staff a program so that it runs smoothly considering each agency’s capacity to take on additional work, internal politics, and customer service capabilities. Understanding the strengths and weaknesses of partnering entities is critical and will inform staffing decisions, such as where to “house” program staff and what the program staff’s responsibilities will be.

CONSIDERATIONS UNIQUE TO COMMERCE

In addition to understanding GBP best practices, Commerce should keep in mind these unique considerations:

- **Most GBPs do not focus on disadvantaged communities or industrial businesses. However, the CAGBN is working to change this.** GBPs typically exist in wealthier

regions, targeting small- to medium-sized businesses in service sectors. Large industrial manufacturers are more difficult to address because they cannot be evaluated and certified using a standardized checklist. In addition, operational changes can be more costly and time consuming. However, the industrial sector consumes significant amounts of resources, generating high volumes of both toxic and non-toxic waste, usually at the expense of low-income families. For this reason, industrial manufacturers are seen as a necessary focus as programs continue to evolve.

- **Commerce differs from many cities with GBPs in that its residential population is small, but its worker population is large.** Commerce will need to adapt its goals and approaches to engage workers and businesses that reside elsewhere, but whose environmental impacts harm the city. The City of Oxnard came up as one of several cities with similar economic characteristics currently working with CAGBN to set up a GBP. Oxnard is in beginning stages of designing a GBP; they could be a partner to learn from.

The CAGBN city and county program managers meet twice a year. This year's first meeting is being held in April in Monterey. Jo Fleming, the Executive Director of the CAGBN, suggested attending this meeting as a way to learn more about CAGBN, meet the members, and learn about the new database that is getting launched in March.

Appendix A



**SAN FRANCISCO
GREEN
BUSINESS**

Click on links for helpful tips.

A [General](#)

B [Waste](#)

C [Energy](#)

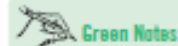
D [Water](#)

E [Pollution](#)

REQUIRED ITEMS

Bold items indicate a required measure in San Francisco and must be completed, if applicable.

Web site:
sfgreenbusiness.org/toolkit



Green Notes
Offer individual employee awards such as "zero waste hero of the month." Reward the winners with prizes such as gift certificates to local green businesses.

OFFICE/RETAIL, FEB 2014

SAN FRANCISCO GREEN BUSINESS PROGRAM STANDARDS OFFICE/RETAIL

- Instructions**
- 1 In order to qualify as a San Francisco Green Business, you must be in compliance with environmental regulations and implement the minimum requirements of this checklist.
 - 2 This checklist is for your review only. When you are ready to apply, please register at greenbusinessca.org. Fill out the checklist as best you can and then email or phone your San Francisco coordinator directly.
 - 3 In cases where the measures on this checklist are not entirely applicable, we may ask your business to implement additional practices customized for your business.
 - 4 This hand icon indicates that you will need to provide additional information so we can compute the environmental savings of your business (GHG reduced, gallons of water saved, kWh saved, etc.). **Items appear in green.**

REQUIRED ITEMS Bold items indicate a required measure in SF and must be completed, if applicable.

General

General

total measures needed: 5

- 1-01 Post signage encouraging resource conservation (e.g. reminders to turn off lights, turn off faucets, recycling and composting, etc.)
- 1-02 Train new employees on green business procedures and practices implemented by your business through your company's employee handbook.
- 1-03 Adopt a written environmental policy statement stating your business's commitment to operate as a green business, which must include a detailed green purchasing policy.
- 1-04 Inform your customers about your business environmental efforts and what you are doing to meet the green business standards. For example: Post the Green Business logo, certification and pledge in a visible location; Post reminders listing steps you are taking to be a Green Business; Offer tours that highlight your Green Business successes; Offer customers green service or amenities options; Highlight your Green Business efforts and/or certification on your website, and link it to the Green Business Program home page.
- 1-05 Provide 3 on-going incentives or training opportunities to encourage management and employee participation in the Green Business Program. For example, incorporate Green Business into performance appraisals, job descriptions, training programs, employee orientations, staff meeting discussions, employee reference material, company newsletter or bulletins and company suggestion and reward programs

Waste

Environmentally Preferable Purchasing

total measures needed: 6

- 1-01 Purchase janitorial paper products with the highest postconsumer waste (PCW) recycled content. Toilet paper and tissues must contain a minimum of 20% PCW recycled content and paper towels must contain a minimum of 40% PCW recycled content.
 - 1-02 Print marketing materials on paper containing a minimum of 50% post consumer waste recycled content, recommended 100%.
 - 1-03 Use letterhead, envelopes and business cards containing a minimum of 50% post consumer waste recycled content, recommended 100%.
 - 1-04 Purchase large format or plotter paper with a minimum 30% recycled content, or higher recycled content if available.
- List of measures is continued on the following page...

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SAN FRANCISCO GREEN BUSINESS

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STATUS

Bold items indicate a required measure in San Francisco and must be completed, if applicable.

Web site
sfgreenbusiness.org/toolkit



Green Notes

For information on setting up successful waste diversion programs and to learn about the cost savings achieved through waste diversion, visit ecologysf.com. You can also call SF Environment's Zero Waste program at (415) 355-3745 for free technical assistance perfecting your recycling or composting program.

OFFICE/RETAIL, FEB 2014

Waste, continued

Environmentally Preferable Purchasing, continued

total measures needed: 6

- 1-03** Use a corrugated or recyclable board in place of foam core boards.
- 1-06** Purchase copy, computer and fax paper with minimum 50% post consumer waste (recommended 100%).
 - ☛ How many reams of paper do you buy annually?
 - ☛ What is the recycled content of the paper? (Options: 30%, 100% and 50%, enter two digits)

Source Reduction

total measures needed: 9

- 2-01** Eliminate individual bottles of water for employees and guests.
- 2-02** In the employee cafeteria, kitchen or break room, replace disposables with permanent dishware and use bulk items (snacks, condiments, salt/pepper, etc.).
- 2-03** Eliminate the use of plastic bags. Use paper bags containing a minimum of 40% post consumer waste recycled content or BPI certified compostable bags.
- 2-04** Make two sided printing and copying standard practice in your business (set printers and copiers to default to duplex printing). Make single-sided the exception instead of the rule.
- 2-05** Keep a stack of previously used paper near printers to use for drafts or internal memos, or designate a draft tray on printers with multiple trays.
- 3-01 Reuse paper or plastic packaging materials in your own shipments.
- 3-02 Retailers - offer an incentive to customers who bring their own shopping bags, coffee mugs, etc. and/or use a disincentive such as charging a fee for disposable containers and bag.
- 3-03 Reduce junk mail. See StopJunkMail.org for tips.
- 3-04 Reduce number of trash/compost/recycle bin liners by reusing bags or having unlined bins. If lining compost bins, use BPI certified bags.
- 3-05 For catered events (lunches, meetings, etc.) institute a zero waste policy. If disposable dishware is necessary use recyclable/compostable options and have composting/recycling collection easily accessible.
- 3-06 Donate, sell, or exchange unwanted but usable items (furniture, supplies, electronics, office supplies, etc.). Document donations and sales of materials. Use the RecycleWhere tool at SFEnvironment.org for help.
- 3-07 Retailers- offer durable, reusable bags at checkout.

Waste Diversion

total measures needed: 2

- 4-01** Divert all compostable and recyclable materials from landfill to demonstrate compliance with San Francisco's Mandatory Composting and Recycling Ordinance (SFEnvironment.org/mandatory).
 - ☛ Do you pay your own garbage bill (yes or no)?
If yes, please provide the level of service you receive (number of bins, capacity, pickup frequency).
 - ☛ How many employees does your business have at the certified location? (Leave blank if already entered for previous measure.)
- 4-02** Designate a recycling coordinator(s) to take responsibility for monitoring/maintaining proper waste diversion and conducting ongoing education.

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REQUIRED MEASURES

Bold items indicate a required measure in San Francisco and must be completed, if applicable.

Web site:
sfgreenbusiness.org/toolkit

Green Notes

SF Environment in a partnership with PG&E, provides free energy audits, reports, technical assistance, and rebates, for all commercial and multifamily customers in San Francisco. Contact SF Environment's SF Energy Watch program and we will refer you to PG&E's Express Efficiency program for efficiency rebates not covered in our programs. SF Energy Watch: SFEnergyWatch.org

Energy

Energy Conservation

total measures needed: 6

- 1-01** Use small fans OR space heater during off hours instead of conditioning entire office.
- 1-02** Use ENERGY STAR® office equipment and enable energy saving features.
 - ☛ How many ENERGY STAR rated LCD monitors does your business use?
 - ☛ How many ENERGY STAR rated copier/printer units does your business use?
- 1-03** If you are a large business or have a complex network, use power management software programs to automatically activate power management settings in computers and printers (see- http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=power_mgt.pr_power_mgt_enterprises).
 - ☛ How many monitors have power management software installed to automatically turn off units when idle?
- 1-04** Use ENERGY STAR qualified refrigerators (those over 10 years old should be replaced).
 - ☛ How many energy efficient minibars do you have?
 - ☛ How many ENERGY STAR rated refrigerators does your business use?
- 1-05** Set refrigerator temperature between 38°F and 41°F and freezer between 10° F and 20°F.
- 1-06** Install programmable thermostat(s) and properly set cooling to 74°F and heating to 68°F. Program the thermostats for unoccupied hours when the facility is closed with cooling set at 90°F and heating at 55°F.

Energy Management

total measures needed: 1

- 2-01** If you pay your energy bill, track monthly energy use using a spreadsheet or online tool (check with your utility provider or try Energy Star's Portfolio Manager).

Lighting

total measures needed: 5

- 3-01** Replace non-dimming incandescent bulbs with LEDs.
- 3-02** Replace high wattage MR-16 halogen lamps with LEDs.
- 3-03** Replace all T-12 fluorescent lighting with energy-efficient T-8 or T-5 fixtures with electronic ballasts or other equivalent efficacy lighting.
 - ☛ How many T-12 lamps have you replaced with T-8s (in electronic ballasts)?
- 3-04** Use energy efficient exit signs, such as LEDs.
 - ☛ How many LED exit signs does your business use?
- 3-05** Use lighting controls such as dual technology occupancy sensors, bypass/delay timers, photocells or time clocks.
 - ☛ How many ice, vending, and snack machines have motion sensors and are placed in shaded areas?
 - ☛ How many rooms have time clocks (for large banks of lights on circuit breaker that generally operate during off hours)?
 - ☛ How many rooms have photo cells (usually for exterior lighting or areas with significant natural light)?
 - ☛ How many rooms are on occupancy sensors (usually in infrequently occupied areas such as restrooms, private offices, locker rooms, conference spaces)?



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REQUIRED ITEMS

Bold items indicate a required measure in San Francisco and must be completed, if applicable.

Web site:
sfgreenbusiness.org/toolkit

Green Notes

San Francisco Public Utilities Commission offers rebates for high efficiency toilets and urinals. For information on where you can buy efficient fixtures and current rebates, contact the SFPUC. sfwater.org. To schedule a free water wise evaluation, contact SFPUC Water Conservation section at (415) 551-4730 or email waterconservation@sfpuc.org to make an appointment. Specify you are currently enrolled in the Green Business Program.

OFFICERETAIL, FEB 2014

Water

Landscaping

total measures needed: 6

- 1-01 Install check valves to eliminate low head drainage.
- 1-02 Install rain shut-off devices or moisture sensors that turn off the irrigation during rain.
- 1-03 Water during early morning, pre-dawn hours.
- 1-04 Match sprinklers with same precipitation rates.
- 1-05 Apply two to three inches of mulch in all non-turf planting areas.
- 1-06 Repair all broken or defective sprinkler heads/nozzles, drip meters, water pipe, lines and valves.

Water Conservation

total measures needed: 4

- 2-01 Replace all urinals flushing at greater than 1.0 gallons with high efficiency urinals, flushing at less than 0.5 gallons, or waterless urinals. Your water utility may have a rebate program for high efficiency urinals.
- 2-02 Retrofit toilets flushing at higher than 1.6 gallons with high efficiency toilets (1.28 gallons or less per flush). Your water utility may have a rebate program for high efficiency toilets.
 - How many employees does your business employ?
 - How many visitors utilize your facility per day (use averages)?
 - How many customers utilize your facility per day (use averages)?
 - What is the flush volume of your OLD toilet?
 - What is the flush volume of your NEW toilet?
- 2-03 Install aerators on kitchen sinks (except fill sinks) and shower heads that do not exceed flow rates of 1.5 gpm.
- 2-04 Install low flow aerators with flow rates not to exceed 0.5 gpm on lavatory sinks.
 - How many employees does your business have at the certified location? (Leave blank if already entered for previous measure.)
 - What is the flow rate of the aerator (it only qualifies as a low flow aerator if the flow rate is below the federal standard of 2.2 gpm)?
 - How many faucets do you have with low flow aerators installed?

Water Management

total measures needed: 2

- 3-01 Regularly check for and repair all leaks in your facility (toilet leaks can be detected in tank toilets with leak detecting tablets, which may be available from your local water provider, or use food coloring).
- 3-02 Track monthly water use and monitor bills for leaks.

Pollution

Clean Air

total measures needed: 4

- 1-01 Sign up for Emergency Ride Home (SFERH.org) that provides a free or low-cost ride home in cases of emergencies for employees who use alternative transportation.
- 1-02 Join the Air Districts Spare the Air program and notify employees and customers of Spare the Air days. (EmployersSpareTheAir.org)
- 1-03 Set-up a Commuter Benefits Program to enable employees to use pre-tax deduction under IRS code 132(f) for transit, vanpool or biking costs (CommuterBenefits.org).
 - What is the total distance (in miles) that all your employees commute per day?



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REQUIRED

Bold items indicate a required measure in San Francisco and must be completed, if applicable.

Web site:
sfgreenbusiness.org/toolkit

Green Notes

Safely dispose of all unwanted chemical products by using the City's VSQG program (contact 415-380-1425) or find a recycling/disposal facility by using RecycleWhere at SFEnvironment.org/recyclewhere

OFFICERETAIL, FEB 2014

- 2-01 Offset your company's CO₂ emissions through purchase of renewable energy credits or installation of renewable energy sources.
- 2-02 Reduce fuel usage through promotion of transit (post maps), biking (provide bike parking and maintenance stipends), and rideshare (use 511.org).

Company Owned Vehicles

total measures needed: 3

- 3-01 During your 3-year recognition period, reduce your transportation GHG emissions by 5%.
- 3-02 Complete and submit the Fuel Tracker and Carbon Calculator for your commercial fleet.
- 3-03 Develop and maintain (through the term of GB recognition) an inventory of your fleet that includes make, model, model year, fuel type, annual vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and gallons of fuel used per year.

Environmentally Preferable Purchasing

total measures needed: 7

- 4-01 Collect items that are prohibited from the garbage (batteries, CFLs, cell phones and other electronics, etc.) and institute a program for their safe disposal. OR Educate employees about disposal options for prohibited items.
- 4-02 When sourcing with a commercial printer, request vegetable or other low-VOC inks.
- 4-03 Purchase EPEAT certified (www.EPEAT.net) computers, laptops and monitors.
 - How many EPEAT CPUs does your business use?
 - How many EPEAT CRTs does your business use?
 - How many EPEAT LCDs does your business use?
- 4-04 Use refilled or remanufactured laser and copier toner cartridges.
 - How many remanufactured toner cartridges do you purchase for use every year?
- 4-05 Use unbleached and/or chlorine-free paper products (copy paper, paper towels, napkins, coffee filters, etc.).
 - How many reams of PCF paper do you buy annually?
- 4-06 Retailers - Offer environmentally preferable products.
- 5-01 Purchase organically or locally grown foods and beverages for the office kitchen.
- 5-02 Do business with other green businesses (greenbusinessca.org).

Janitorial Cleaning

total measures needed: 2

- 6-01 Safely dispose of unwanted or old chemicals (using the City's VSQG program or find a service through SFEnvironment.org's RecycleWhere SFEnvironment.org/recyclewhere)
- 6-02 Use low toxic cleaning products such as those that are SF Approved (SFApproved.org), Green Seal certified (greenseal.org), or receive at least an 8.1 rating on the GoodGuide (goodguide.com), in non-aerosol containers.
 - What is the area (square footage) of your facility? Please include the sq ft of the space you occupy only.

Pest Management

total measures needed: 1

- 7-01 Contract with a PCO certified to practice Integrated Pest Management or request your PCO to implement an IPM Program. Use SF Approved (SFEnvironment.org/toxics-health/safer-practices/pest-management) pesticides only.

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Appendix B

California Green Business Network Member Contact Information

City/County	Name	Email	Phone
CAGBN Executive Director	Jo Fleming	jofleming@environmentalin.com	831-706-7384
ALAMEDA COUNTY	Carolina Miranda	carolinam@cultivatingcapital.com	510-485-9164
CONTRA COSTA COUNTY	Susan Psara	Susan.Psara@hsd.cccounty.us	925.335-3220
CITY OF LAGUNA BEACH	Lisa Ryder	lisarydermoore@gmail.com	310.874.2499
CITY OF LOS ANGELES	George Payba	george.payba@lacity.org	213-485-3698
	Brendon Sher	SherBG@email.laccd.edu	
	Elektra Grant	elektra@artsearthpartnership.org	
CITY OF MANHATTAN BEACH	Lisa Ryder	lisarydermoore@gmail.com	310-874-2499
MARIN COUNTY	Dana Armanino	darmanino@marincounty.org	415-499-3292
CITY OF MISSION VIEJO	Ian Bevan	ian@economicsinc.net	
MONTEREY COUNTY		recycle@co.monterey.ca.us	831-755-4579
NAPA COUNTY	Deborah Elliott	deborah.elliott@countyofnapa.org	707-259-5969
CITY OF RIVERSIDE	Andrew Markis	amarkis@riversideca.gov	(951) 826-5532
SAN BENITO COUNTY	Jeremy Simmons	jsimmons@cosb.us	831-636-4110
SAN FRANCISCO COUNTY	Kevin Kumataka	Kevin.Kumataka@sfgov.org	415-335-3778
SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY	Frank Ferral	fferral@stocktonchamber.org	209-547-2770
SAN MATEO COUNTY	Emi Hashizume		650-599-1441
SANTA BARBARA COUNTY	Frances Gilliland	coordinator@greenbizsbc.org	805-705-1686
SANTA CLARA COUNTY	Lisa Rose	lisa.rose@aem.sccgov.org	408-282-3166
CITY OF SANTA CRUZ	Mary Simmons	msimmons@cityofsantacruz.com	831-420-5592
SANTA CRUZ COUNTY	Ana Maria Rebelo	greenbusiness@co.santa-cruz.ca.us	831-477-3976
CITY OF SANTA MONICA	Susy Borlido	smgbc@sustainableworks.org	310-458-8716 x2
	Karl Bruskotter	karl.bruskotter@smgov.net	310-458-2255
SOLANO COUNTY	Narcissa Untal	nuntal@solanocounty.com	707-784-3172
SONOMA COUNTY		SonomaGreen@sonoma-county.org	707-565-6455
CITY OF THOUSAND OAKS	Rod Cordova	rcordova@toaks.org	805-449-2468
CITY OF VENTURA	Courtney Lindberg	clindberg@cityofventura.net	805-667-6502
CITY OF WATSONVILLE	Julianne Rhodes	jrhodes@envirocentives.com	831-431-3485