

County of Santa Clara
Consumer and Environmental Protection Agency



23-1758

DATE: January 23, 2024 (Item No. 24)
TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Edgar Nolasco, Director, Consumer and Environmental Protection Agency
SUBJECT: Report on Battery Recycling Outreach

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Under advisement from November 7, 2023 (Item No. 11): Receive report from the Consumer and Environmental Protection Agency relating to Battery Recycling Outreach.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

There is no fiscal impact to the General Fund as a result of this action.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION AND BACKGROUND

On November 7, 2023 (Item No. 11), the Board approved a referral from Supervisor Lee requesting staff to submit a report to the Board on January 23, 2024 relating to battery recycling outreach efforts to educate residents and small businesses.

The Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) program is part of the Consumer and Environmental Protection Agency (CEPA). It provides residents with free and convenient household hazardous materials collection and cost-effective hazardous waste disposal for small businesses. Typical types of materials dropped off at our collection sites include unwanted batteries, electronic waste, motor oil, paint, and toxic and corrosive waste. In addition to the services provided by the County, weekly curbside battery collection options are available for all single-family households.

Since 1992, the County has been contracted by fourteen jurisdictions within Santa Clara County, except for the City of Palo Alto, to provide these services. The program operates at cost recovery and is funded by participating cities and statewide grants. The current fiscal year program budget allocates over \$450,000 for educational advertising and close to \$200,000 for staffing for outreach purposes. This funding has allowed the program to conduct robust battery recycling outreach campaigns and provide extensive collection options to residents and small businesses throughout the year. In addition, the program annually pursues state grants and has been continuously awarded grant funds. These funds have been used for multi-lingual radio, television, print educational materials, digital education, and traditional grassroots education.

The HHW program also benefits from education initiatives performed by every city in the county. Each city and its respective contracted solid waste contractors regularly educate the public on the proper disposal of batteries, which have been banned from landfills since 2006. California law also requires retailers selling rechargeable batteries to promote education and implement rechargeable battery collection system. Additionally, the California Legislature recently passed AB 2440 and SB 1215, requiring battery stewardship organizations implement education and collection systems for loose batteries by 2027, which will enhance the existing educational infrastructure in place.

A subcommittee of the Countywide Recycling and Waste Reduction Commission made up of representatives from several cities, focuses on addressing HHW. The Household Hazardous Waste Subcommittee is a dedicated group meeting monthly to discuss ways to engage the public and specifically to promote battery recycling, including the development of a countywide toolkit. All jurisdictions have implemented web, social media, and print campaigns, and some cities have invested in even larger educational advertising footprints. A non-exhaustive list of multi-lingual outreach categories is provided in the table below:

Print Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bill inserts • Commercial new customer guide • Courtesy pickup notice • Doorhangers • Flyers • New resident welcome packets • Newsletters • Non-collection notices • Posters • Summer recreation guides
Social Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facebook • Hamlet • Medium • NextDoor • Nixle • WhatsApp • X (formerly known as Twitter) • YouTube
Digital Outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City websites • County website • E-Newsletters • Solid waste haulers websites
Paid Ad Campaigns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Radio advertising • San Jose Sharks in arena advertising

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valley Transportation Authority bus advertising
Person to Person	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community events • School presentations
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hot stamps on collection carts • Cart tags/hang tags on collection containers • Signs on solid waste collection vehicles • Stickers on collection containers

As a result of the robust outreach, the program successfully collected and recycled over 80 tons of batteries in Fiscal Year 2022-2023.

Given the current level of education and successful safe battery collection for recycling and disposal, staff is not requesting additional funding as sufficient efforts are in place to promote the safe collection and disposal of batteries from residents and small businesses.

CHILD IMPACT

The recommended action will have no/neutral impact on children and youth.

SENIOR IMPACT

The recommended action will have no/neutral impact on seniors.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

The recommended action will have no/neutral sustainability implications.