



**R-20**

**To:** Mayor and City Council

December 6, 2011

**From:** Suja Lowenthal, Second District 

**Subject:** Recycling Rewards Program

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**REQUESTED ACTION:**

Respectfully request an update from the City Manager on recent efforts to increase recycling rates among residents and businesses through a rewards program.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

As a coastal city book-ended by two rivers, Long Beach is very aware of the environmental effects of litter on our beaches and in our marine ecosystem. However, in an effort to reduce landfill waste, non-point source pollution and marine debris, the City has taken a leadership role over the last two decades, using private and public partnerships to improve our city services for residents and businesses. As a result, we have benefited from the likes of the Southeast Resource Recovery Facility (SERRF), which diverts waste from landfills and keeps our refuse bill lower than average; improved our storm drain infrastructure; almost finished construction of a hazardous waste recovery facility; increased recycling rates among multi-family residences; and begun development of a program enabling goods and materials to be donated and reused by non-profits, schools, residents and businesses.

Another creative program offered in several cities throughout the United States and Europe is a recycling, conservation and healthy initiatives program that rewards residents, businesses, non-profits and municipalities through discounts and deals with local business and national corporations by harnessing their collective will to make eco-conscious choices in their everyday actions. Recyclebank® is a primary example of this rewards program, enabling people to earn points for their everyday activities such as curbside recycling, water conservation, e-waste disposal, composting, and green commerce.

Nearly two years ago, I met with Recyclebank® representatives and came away with a vision of how Long Beach could tie all of its wonderful existing programs together for the benefit of residents, community groups and local businesses by partnering with an organization like Recyclebank®. I encouraged representatives and city management to discuss what a program in Long Beach would look like and how we might incorporate our reusable bag initiative into the rewards program. Those conversations have allowed staff to move forward with a recycling rewards program concept that appears close to being shared with City Council and the public.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no fiscal impact to the General Fund.