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WEEKLY Single Stream Recycling – January 5!

Beginning January 5th, the City of Philadelphia will begin collecting recyclables on a weekly basis, the same day as trash day. Are you ready? Learn how to get a recycling bin at www.recyclenowphila.org or www.recyclingpays.phila.gov.

Christmas Treecycle!

This year make sure you join the 93% of Americans who participate in municipal Christmas tree recycling programs. The City of Philadelphia is offering Christmas tree recycling beginning Monday, January 5th through Saturday, January 17th from 8:00am to 6:00 pm at the following sanitation yards:

- Southwest Philadelphia (near Passyunk Ave.), 3033 South 63rd St.
- Northwest Philadelphia, Domino Ln. and Umbria St.
- Northeast Philadelphia, State Rd. and Ashburner St.

Trees must be free of all lights and ornaments and may not be wrapped or bagged in any way. Trees set out curbside will be picked up with the garbage and NOT recycled.

Recycling Holiday Lights

No need to throw away your old lights after the holidays. Now you can recycle them. Here are two programs that will recycle your lights. All you have to do is put them in a box and send them to the right place. Click on the two links below to find out how to recycle your holiday lights:

- http://www.christmas-light-source.com/Christmas-Lights-Recycling-Program_c_210.html
- http://www.holidayleds.com/holidayledscom_christmas_light_recycling_program

Got a new TV for the Holidays? Don't throw your old one away; Recycle It!

With the digital TV conversion coming in February (visit <http://www.dtv2009.gov/> for more information on the conversion and to get your \$40 coupon for a converter box) many people are opting to get a new TV (though you don't need a new TV). If you decide to purchase a new TV or get one for the holidays, make sure you recycle your old TV or donate it for reuse. **TVs contain hazardous materials like lead and mercury and should NEVER be thrown in a landfill!**

How to recycle unusable TVs:

Take it to the Streets Department Sanitation Convenience Centers located at Domino Ln. & Umbria St. or State Rd. & Ashburner St. Monday through Saturday, from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm.

You can also check out PA's Department of Environmental Protection's website to find a licensed electronics recycler in your area:

<http://www.depweb.state.pa.us/landrecwaste/cwp/view.asp?a=1242&q=464411>.

The State of Philly Recycling – Winter 2009: Weekly Single Stream Recycling Is Here. What's Next?

Where We've Been:

- **The Campaign.** Since its creation in 2005, the RecycleNOW Philadelphia campaign has collected 12,000 petition signatures, spearheaded the city council hearing on recycling in February 2007, and helped foster an unprecedented environmental awareness in city government and politics.
- **Nutter's 5 Point Pledge.** During the 2007 mayoral campaign, Michael Nutter and the 5 other candidates, endorsed RecycleNOW's 5 point agenda. The 5 point agenda calls on the mayor to be the official voice and champion of recycling, to initiate a national search to hire qualified personnel for key recycling jobs, to re-task and reorganize the recycling and solid waste advisory boards, to create a comprehensive plan for waste and recycling and to provide the financing to implement the plan.

Where We Stand:

- **Expanded Recycling Amid Budget Cuts.** We congratulate Mayor Nutter on his enthusiasm and action on behalf of recycling. Weekly, single stream recycling collection will be citywide beginning January 5, 2009. It is highly commendable that recycling remains fully intact despite the recent city financial crisis and budget cuts. Mayor Nutter rightfully understands that recycling is a tool to save taxpayer money in the long run as well as create local jobs and a more sustainable city.
- **Commodity Price Challenge.** On top of the city's financial crisis, a crisis has hit the recycling commodities market. Earlier this year, Philadelphia was earning a small sum of money for each truckload of recyclables deposited at the Blue Mountain Recycling facility. Due to international commodity prices, that payment has now been greatly reduced, but despite increased disposal costs, Philadelphia remains committed to recycling. The bottom line is that recycling still saves money over paying to landfill our waste at a cost of \$63 per ton.
- **Setting Higher Goals.** The city's recycling diversion rate currently stands at a little over 10 percent. The Philadelphia Streets Department's official stated target is 18 percent by 2011. What is less clear is how the city expects to reach these higher goals once weekly recycling collection is implemented. What happens next? The city plans to step up its educational and enforcement campaigns, but it is unclear how Philadelphia plans to raise the residential recycling rate above the mid-teens.
- **Nutter's Grade: Incomplete.** Despite the money allocated to recycling improvements and an uptick in recycling diversion rates (3% in the past year), the mayor's commitment to the 5 point agenda lies half unfulfilled. Mayor Nutter has thus far followed through on Points 1 and 5: becoming the official voice of recycling and providing money to implement recycling. On Point 3, the Mayor is presently reorganizing and reenergizing the Recycling Advisory Committee and the Solid Waste Advisory Committee into one

comprehensive group. On Point 2, the city's Recycling Coordinator position has not been filled after nearly a year and a half, and no individuals with experience in recovery-based waste management or advanced collection systems have been hired, either within or as a consultant to the Streets Department.

- **Where's the Plan?** Most importantly, on Point 4, the city has produced no integrated solid waste management plan and has not launched an incentive-based (RecycleBank or other) pilot for 10,000 to 100,000 households as Mayor Nutter promised during his campaign in the 2007 election. Despite the additional \$25 million towards recycling over the next 5 years, the recycling program is only as good as its plan.

Where We Need To Go:

- **Incentive-based Recycling.** Why does Philadelphia ignore a proven method for dramatically increasing recycling and saving money with the incentive-based RecycleBank model? RecycleBank, a Philadelphia-based company, increased recycling rates in Wilmington, Delaware from zero to 35 percent in less than two years and increased recycling participation rates to 90 percent in select Philadelphia neighborhoods during a discontinued pilot program. Philadelphia should re-visit this incentive-based model that not only dramatically increases recycling rates, but also saves the city money on worker's compensation and disability costs, as well as invests money back into the local economy. An expanded pilot project audited by a third party should be conducted to determine if and how RecycleBank could operate in Philadelphia.
- **More Philadelphians Recycling More.** Philadelphia needs to make sure every household has the proper information and a recycling bin in order to increase the recycling participation rate. The city should expand the sanitation drop-off sites into true recycling centers that accept all recyclable materials in addition to hard-to-recycle items like batteries, light bulbs, and plastics #3-#7. Commendably, several of these sites already accept bulk metal items, auto tires, electronics, and yard waste. The city plans to accept organics at select sites throughout the 2009 growing season (April – December).
- **Organics.** Food and yard waste represents 25 percent of our total waste, and in Philadelphia nearly all of it is sent to a landfill. When landfilled, organics break down anaerobically and produce methane, a greenhouse gas 70 times more potent than the carbon dioxide we always hear about. If Mayor Nutter is serious about Philadelphia reaching a 40 percent recycling rate and becoming America's greenest city, recycling organics is a must. All of the leading recycling cities with high diversion rates collect organics: Toronto – 42 percent; Seattle – 55 percent; Los Angeles – 62 percent; San Francisco – 70 percent.
- **Zero Waste.** RecycleNOW has seen the future and it is zero waste. At RecycleNOW's November 15, 2008 symposium, we learned from Brenda Platt of the Institute for Local Self Reliance that zero waste is a concept that every forward-thinking, sustainable city must examine: a system where all discarded materials are resources for others to use. It means recycling and reusing all materials, as well as better product design to recover all resources, and not burn or bury them. As they say, if you are not for zero waste, how much waste are you for?

What We Can Do:

- **Demand More Recycling.** There are many ways that you can help improve recycling in Philadelphia:

- Sign the RecycleNOW petition.
- Check out <http://www.recyclenowphila.org> and get educated. If you have questions you can't find an answer to, email info@recyclenowphilly.org.
- Join a RecycleNOW Philadelphia neighborhood chapter.
- Talk to your City Councilpersons and tell them recycling is important to you.
- Make sure your neighbors have the information and a bin to recycle, especially when collection goes weekly this January.
- Lead by example, help fight global warming, and start composting in your backyard.
- And most importantly – continue to flood Mayor Nutter with questions about recycling and press him on the city's plan to improve recycling in Philadelphia.

RecycleNOW Philadelphia wishes everyone a happy holiday season and joyous New Year!

As always, feel free to email us questions and comments at info@recyclenowphilly.org.