



# Opportunities for Sustainable Communities



## WHAT IS CRC?

The California Department of Conservation (DOC) Comprehensive Recycling Community (CRC) Program is designed to help communities increase beverage container recycling by implementing coordinated, ongoing programs that will maximize local recycling potential. **Additionally**, the program provides an opportunity for other governmental and non-governmental entities to focus their environmental initiatives in participating communities and help those communities reach their sustainability goals.

## HOW DOES IT WORK?

The DOC, through its Division of Recycling, develops partnerships with local representatives to assess opportunities to increase the volume of beverage containers recycled by residents, businesses, and in public venues and other locations. Extensive technical assistance and numerous resources are available in support of this project, such as potential funding, marketing, public relations services and outreach at local events. The DOC intends to increase beverage container recycling per capita by 15% in four targeted communities annually in an overall effort to meet the 80% statewide recycling rate. By establishing partnerships with each targeted community, DOC facilitates efforts to provide more recycling opportunities while working to enhance beverage container recycling infrastructure and promote the recycling message to the public.

However, beverage container recycling is only one part of the sustainability picture, and communities have a variety of concerns that could be more effectively addressed with outside assistance. Using already established partnerships, DOC can facilitate meetings between local and outside agencies to discuss issues such as waste diversion, air and water quality, transportation, and green building.

## HOW ARE COMMUNITIES CHOSEN?

The criteria for inviting participation from new CRC communities include a variety of considerations, such as population, existing environmental initiatives, a proactive and enthusiastic local government and the need to expand recycling programs to assist with diversion requirements. CRC communities scheduled for 2008 are Culver City, Riverside, Tracy and South Lake Tahoe. Efforts in each community are expected to last from 18-24 months.

## **WHAT ARE THE RESULTS SO FAR?**

The CRC Program began with a 2007 pilot project in the Monterey Peninsula. Initial results are as follows:

- Established direct communication between local governments and Division of Recycling for more effective implementation of the California Refund Value program.
- Leveraged state and local resources to expand recycling efforts by cities at major events, businesses, and public facilities.
- Established new recycling infrastructure – e.g. additional bins -- to increase the volume and decrease the contamination of material recycled at venues such as the County Fairgrounds.
- Increased local government awareness of state grants, resulting in new funding for recycling infrastructure.
- Raised community awareness and understanding about recycling through a media campaign that included paid television, radio, print and online advertising, as well as “earned” media through local television and print news coverage. Telephone survey research conducted after the media campaign demonstrated higher levels of recycling knowledge and participation, as well as positive attitudes toward the recycling messages, when compared with research conducted prior to the campaign.
- Fostered recycling as a sustainable behavior at schools, recycling centers, golf courses, county fair, hotels, bars and restaurants.
- Raised per-capita recycling 18 percent in the project area – from 491 containers recycled per person in 2005 to 595 in 2007.

## **WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF JOINING DOC IN THIS EFFORT?**

This is a unique collaborative effort between the State, local government, businesses, industry, non-profits and the public to develop and implement strategies or best practices that increase our ability to create “sustainable communities.” With willing partners, we can leverage our existing relationships, resources and information to create measurable results within specific geographic areas over a defined time span.

## **WHO SHOULD WE CONTACT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT CRC OPPORTUNITIES?**

John Muma, Supervisor  
Division of Recycling/CRC Section  
1-800-RECYCLE (1-800-732-9253)

Luree Stetson, Sustainability Coordinator  
California Department of Conservation  
(916) 322-1080