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San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments Rolls Out Pilot Program to Make Recycling Household Batteries Easier

Wireless News
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Via a grant from the Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle), the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments (SGVCOG) is making it easier for consumers to recycle household batteries, according to a release.

Since 2006, the State of California has banned disposal of these types of batteries in the trash. The SGVCOG is creating a program for consumers to support proper battery recycling and management by providing convenient drop-off locations at retail and business locations throughout the San Gabriel Valley.

In preparation for the launch of a pilot battery take-back program, SGVCOG conducted focus groups and phone survey research of San Gabriel Valley residents in 2010 that revealed more people would recycle household hazardous materials if recycling were more convenient.

Highlights of the research include:

- Only 59 percent of those surveyed were aware of the battery disposal ban
- 56 percent of respondents still dispose of batteries in the trash
- Residents stated that they continued to dispose of batteries in the trash despite knowing about the disposal ban because recycling was so inconvenient.

Since the current system was not working, the residents were surveyed on possible alternatives and 85 percent indicated that they are likely to participate in a retailer "take-back" program for used batteries and lamps, which led the SGVCOG to develop a take-back program.

The SGVCOG pilot battery take-back program will provide convenient drop off locations for consumers in the San Gabriel Valley by partnering with local businesses to provide collection services. Participating businesses display an identifying sticker in their window and place a collection box, provided by SGVCOG, within their store where consumers can properly dispose of non-working batteries. This program is the first to collaborate with local retailers in the area and identify best practices that other local governments can implement.

"Similar to most parts of the state, a simple and convenient process to recycle batteries had not yet been established in San Gabriel Valley," said Nick Conway, SGVCOG Executive Director. "We are excited to partner with 35 local retailers who have agreed to participate as collection sites over the next year to test a take-back system that would make recycling more convenient."

The collection sites range from grocery stores to camera shops throughout the San Gabriel Valley.

SGVCOG is working with the California Product Stewardship Council (CPSC) on this project in order to increase the involvement of battery producers and retailers in the end-of-life management of their products.

"The survey and focus groups concluded that both consumers and retailers agree that producers should make products less toxic and then help pay for the proper management of products at their end of life," said Heidi Sanborn, CPSC Executive Director. "In our outreach we teach people how programs like this are successful in minimizing a negative impact on human health and the environment as well as taxpayers and garbage ratepayers."

CPSC is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting product stewardship and extended producer responsibility (EPR). EPR shares the responsibility for end-of-life product management among all entities involved in the product chain, instead of it solely being a taxpayer and ratepayer responsibility. Currently, local governments bear the burden and \$100-million cost to properly collect, recycle or dispose of household hazardous waste (HHW) as mandated by state-wide bans. The County of Los Angeles spends over \$10 million per year to dispose of HHW.

In addition to the take-back locations set up through this pilot program, residents may properly dispose of batteries at HHW round-up events throughout the County of Los Angeles. The events are jointly sponsored by the County of Los Angeles and the Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County.

More Information:



<http://www.sgvcog.org/batteryrecycling>

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