

SWARM Committee Teleconference
Wednesday, May 6, 2026, 10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

Summary

Los Angeles County Public Works convened a SWARM committee meeting to introduce and discuss the County's proposed Household Hazardous Waste Extended Producer Responsibility Ordinance. The meeting served as the first in a planned series of stakeholder outreach sessions intended to gather feedback and inform development of the ordinance.

Mr. Cid Tesoro, Deputy Director of Los Angeles County Public Works Environmental Services Core Service Area, and newly appointed Chair of the SWARM Committee effective May 1, welcomed attendees and highlighted SWARM's role within Infrastructure LA in advancing sustainable waste and recycling management through regional collaboration.

Mr. Tesoro acknowledged the leadership and contributions of former Chair Will Chen and former Vice Chair Emiko Thompson for their service to the committee. He emphasized the County's commitment to collaborative stakeholder engagement throughout the ordinance development process.

Attendance:

- Over 80 participants joined the call:
 - Participants included representatives from Public Works and other County departments, cities, waste haulers, technology developers, and environmental groups.
 - Cities in attendance included: Long Beach, Sunny Vale, Morgan Hill, Mountain View, Redondo Beach, Torrance, Beverly Hills, San Jose and Sacramento.

Presentations:

- Presentations were provided by:
 - Mr. Siyavash Araumi, Senior Civil Engineer, Los Angeles County Public Works
 - Ms. Heidi Sanborn, Executive Director/CEO, National Stewardship Action Council

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Introduction to EPR and National Perspective

Christopher Sheppard, Principal Engineer with Los Angeles County Public Works Environmental Programs Division, introduced the meeting objectives and outlined the stakeholder engagement process.

Mr. Sheppard then introduced Heidi Sanborn, Founding Executive Director and CEO of the National Stewardship Action Council (NSAC) and Stewardship Action Foundation (SAF). Ms. Sanborn provided an overview of Extended Producer Responsibility programs and discussed recent state and national HHW EPR efforts.

Ms. Sanborn emphasized:

- The importance of shared responsibility among producers, retailers, service providers, and governments
- The role of EPR in improving environmental outcomes
- The need for practical and operationally feasible frameworks
- Industry interest in collaborating with the County during ordinance development

Upon concluding her presentation, attendees had the opportunity to ask Ms. Sanborn questions.

Overview of Los Angeles County HHW Program

Siya Araumi, Section Head within the Environmental Programs Division, presented background information on the County's HHW program and the proposed ordinance framework.

Key points included:

- HHW contains hazardous materials that require specialized handling and disposal
- Improper disposal poses risks to public health, sanitation workers, and the environment
- Residents often store hazardous products in homes for extended periods
- The 2025 Los Angeles wildfires highlighted the scale of HHW challenges, including removal of over 355 tons of HHW and more than 1,000 lithium-ion batteries during cleanup operations

Current Program Challenges

The County shared data demonstrating increasing pressures on the existing HHW system:

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- Approximately 53,435 tons of HHW are generated annually in Los Angeles County
- Existing County programs currently collect approximately 8% of estimated HHW volumes
- Combined regional collection efforts capture an estimated 20% of HHW overall
- Annual HHW program costs increased from approximately \$8.75 million (FY 2018–2021 average) to nearly \$14 million in FY 2023–24
- Achieving full diversion would require an estimated additional \$58 million annually

Board Motion and Ordinance Development

The County Board of Supervisors adopted a motion on January 14, 2025 directing Public Works and partner departments to evaluate a Countywide HHW EPR ordinance for products not already covered under State legislation.

The County's feasibility evaluation included:

- Review of successful EPR programs in other jurisdictions
- Identification of potential covered products
- Assessment of enforcement mechanisms and penalties
- Evaluation of sustainable funding models and collection systems

Proposed Ordinance Framework

The proposed ordinance would establish a comprehensive EPR system for covered HHW products generated by residents in unincorporated Los Angeles County.

Key components include:

- Producer-funded collection, transportation, recycling, and disposal programs
- Development of permanent, year-round take-back locations
- Expansion of equitable and convenient disposal access Countywide
- Creation of Producer Responsibility Organizations (PROs)
- Stewardship plans outlining collection systems, reporting, outreach, and compliance measures
- County oversight, enforcement authority, auditing, and reporting requirements

Products already regulated under existing California EPR laws would be excluded from the program.

County Oversight and Enforcement

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The ordinance would authorize Public Works to:

- Review and approve stewardship plans
- Require plan revisions and corrections
- Enforce compliance requirements
- Suspend or revoke noncompliant plans
- Establish reporting and monitoring requirements
- Determine producer obligations and covered product eligibility

Stakeholder Engagement and Public Comment

The County emphasized that stakeholder engagement remains central to ordinance development.

Upcoming outreach efforts will include:

- Additional stakeholder meetings focused on industry, environmental groups, and local jurisdictions
- Publication of draft ordinance materials and covered product lists
- Ongoing transparency through documentation of comments and revisions

The public comment period will remain open through July 17, 2026.

Stakeholders may submit comments through:

- The HHW EPR Ordinance website LACounty.PW/HHW-EPR
- For questions regarding the HHW EPR Ordinance, contact HHW-EPR@pw.lacounty.gov
- Dedicated email submissions
- Additional outreach channels identified by Public Works

Frequently Asked Questions

The meeting also included discussion of several frequently asked questions, including:

- Applicability of the ordinance to cities
- Scope and flexibility of covered product categories
- Authority to update covered product lists
- Potential impacts of program costs on consumers
- Long-term benefits of producer-funded systems compared to taxpayer-funded models

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General Q&A

After Mr. Araumi's presentation, attendees had the opportunity to ask additional questions about the proposed HHW EPR Ordinance and stakeholder outreach process.

Closing Remarks

County representatives thanked attendees for their participation and encouraged continued engagement throughout the stakeholder process.

Meeting materials, recordings, FAQs, and future meeting information will be posted on the SWARM and HHW EPR Ordinance websites.

Attendees were encouraged to:

- Submit written comments during the public comment period
- Participate in upcoming stakeholder meetings
- Join the SWARM mailing list for future updates

The meeting concluded with remarks from Chair Cid Tesoro, who reaffirmed the County's commitment to collaboration and development of an effective and cost-efficient HHW EPR program for Los Angeles County.