

# Portland Haulers Association

Testimony to Portland Planning and Sustainability Commission

*Residential Solid Waste and Recycling Rates*

April 28, 2020

**Introduction** - Good afternoon Chair Spevak and members of the Commission.

I am Beth Vargas Duncan, Regional Director for Oregon Refuse and Recycling Association (ORRA). In that capacity I represent the Portland Hauler's Association (PHA) whose members provide the residential solid waste and recycling collection services within Portland. Every Portland hauler providing residential garbage and recycling collection service is a member of PHA.

We hope this message finds you safe and well during these unsettling times of COVID-19. Early communication with Bureau of Planning and Sustainability staff enabled PHA members to promptly implement actions protecting the safety of Portland citizens, residential customers, and PHA members' employees. For example, PHA members are providing alternative customer access upon closure of public offices, supporting employees working remotely, staggering shifts for drivers, and enhancing hygiene practices. All of this is occurring as essential solid waste workers simultaneously face added risks daily while sustaining their usual high level of collection service.

**Rate Review** – Despite the ongoing emergency and implementation of many new actions, PHA members and city staff have continued the routine of working closely together through the annual rate review process.

- Portland residential service haulers engaged in a robust rate review process and worked cooperatively with the city providing detailed financial information.
- The city's rate consultant reviewed the financial information and rates to determine cost of service and projecting cost for the coming year. The haulers and city staff collectively discussed the calculations and projections ensuring accuracy for both the haulers and the ratepayers.
- PHA believes the rate review and setting process is fair with the right balance of independent review and transparency to assure reasonable rates for the haulers for their service and to the Portland customers they serve.

We support the rate adjustments as city staff presented.

**Call to Action** – We ask the Portland community to support us in providing safe sustainable services.

- Seal Garbage in Bags – To protect the health and safety of our essential workers and the Portland community, we encourage customers to tightly seal their garbage in bags and “right size” their garbage carts so garbage bags fit within the garbage containers for automated collection. This is particularly important as people dispose of added residential solid waste while staying at home.
- Recycle Right – Oregonians continue to lead the nation in recycling and with more waste disposal at home, we ask residents to continually improve and seek the latest information on

what is recyclable and what should not be in the recycling cart; everyone can reduce, reuse and recycle right.

**Conclusion**

Facing added risks with COVID-19, PHA’s solid waste essential employees report for work each day with high morale and pride in protecting and servicing the people of Portland. PHA member companies continue safe collection and support of Oregon’s superior recycling system, while also advancing opportunities for more diversity in the waste management industry.

Regardless of the challenges confronting us, whether it is COVID-19 or recycling market disruptions, over the decades PHA members have consistently worked in strong collaboration with BPS staff and other stakeholders to efficiently and effectively address challenges with sustainable results.

We ask that the Portland Planning and Sustainability Commission recommend that the Portland City Council adopt the rates as presented by city staff. We look forward to partnering with the city in the future and PHA appreciates the opportunity to serve Portland.

I am available to answer any questions.

Thank you,

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