

Portland Haulers Association

Testimony to Portland Planning and Sustainability Commission *Residential Solid Waste and Recycling Rates* May 4, 2021

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 uncertain times of COVID. PHA members comply with rigorous standards for health and safety while providing Portland customers with affordable, efficient, and environmentally sound operations. We continued service through COVID and the fires last year. In partnership with the city we have built a progressive, nationally recognized residential franchise waste collection program that serves a leadership role in recycling.

PHA continuously improves as demonstrated through implementation of mixed food waste recovery, clean fleet standards, side guards on our trucks, and expansion of diversity equity and inclusion activities in our work force and vendor networks. Most recently, PHA partnered with Work Systems to provide recycling and garbage truck training with preference to BIPOC populations and women. PHA members value quality service to all residents at a reasonable cost.

Rate Review – Despite COVID challenges, PHA members and city staff have continued the routine of working diligently 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

Regardless of the challenges confronting us, whether it is COVID-19 or smoke filled fires, over the decades PHA members have consistently worked in strong collaboration with the City of Portland staff and 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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