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LOS ANGELES COUNTY
SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE/
INTEGRATED WASTE MANAGEMENT TASK FORCE
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June 7, 2021

The Honorable Ben Allen, Chair
Senate Committee on Environmental Quality
State Capitol, Room 2205
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Senator Allen:

**SUPPORT – ASSEMBLY JOINT RESOLUTION 4 (CRISTINA GARCIA) AS REVISED ON
APRIL 5, 2021 – BASEL CONVENTION: RATIFICATION**

The Los Angeles County Solid Waste Management Committee/Integrated Waste Management Task Force (Task Force) **supports** Assembly Joint Resolution 4 (AJR 4), as revised on April 5, 2021.

AJR 4, if enacted, would resolve that the Legislature supports the goals of the Basel Convention and the May 2019 Amendment to include plastic as a hazardous material for purposes of the convention, and declare California to be in favor of the United States' ratification of the Basel Convention at the earliest opportunity and would request the Biden Administration to accomplish this ratification as a matter of urgency.

The Task Force supports the joint resolution as the Basel Convention established required amendments concerning plastic waste to ensure control and transparency for international movements of plastic waste which are not likely to be properly recycled. Combating unrestricted toxic trade, the treaty promotes national self-sufficiency in waste management. Under the Basel Convention plastics amendment, which came into effect on January 1, 2021, parties to the convention that wish to export most mixed and contaminated plastic wastes will first need to obtain consent from the receiving nation(s). This requires notification by the exporting country and consent by the importing country, providing assurance of environmentally sound management, and failure to comply with requirements results in illegal traffic and lawsuits.

According to UPSTREAM, less than 9 percent of plastic waste is recycled, and that percentage is dropping since the implementation of China's National Sword, which severely restricted the amount of foreign waste China accepts. These materials are now either piling up in recycling centers, being landfilled, or sent to improper facilities in Southeast Asia where they are incinerated, or simply dumped in impoverished areas and affecting the environment. As the world's fifth-largest economy, California has a responsibility to lead on solutions to the growing plastic waste pollution crisis. AJR 4 finds that "California must avoid becoming complicit with or engaged in illegal trafficking in plastic waste, should prevent the use of single-use plastics that create hard-to-recycle plastic waste, and should develop infrastructure to better recycle plastic

The Honorable Ben Allen
June 7, 2021
Page 2

products and create new sustainable industries and jobs." Recycling is an essential part of Sustainable Materials Management, an approach that emphasizes the productive and sustainable use of materials across their entire life cycle, while minimizing their environmental and public health impacts.

Pursuant to Chapter 3.67 of the Los Angeles County Code and the California Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989 (Assembly Bill 939), the Task Force is responsible for coordinating the development of all major solid waste planning documents prepared for the County of Los Angeles and the 88 cities in Los Angeles County with a combined population in excess of ten million. Consistent with these responsibilities and to ensure a coordinated and cost-effective and environmentally sound solid waste management system in Los Angeles County, the Task Force also addresses issues impacting the system on a countywide basis. The Task Force membership includes representatives of the League of California Cities-Los Angeles County Division, County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors, City of Los Angeles, waste management industry, environmental groups, the public, and a number of other governmental agencies.

Based on the foregoing, the Task Force **Supports** AJR 4. If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Mike Mohajer, a member of the Task Force, at MikeMohajer@yahoo.com or at (909) 592-1147.

Sincerely,



Margaret Clark, Vice-Chair
Los Angeles County Solid Waste Management Committee/
Integrated Waste Management Task Force and
Mayor, City of Rosemead

EC:pg:cso

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cc: Assembly Member Cristina Garcia
Each Member and staff of the Senate Committee on Environmental Quality
California State Association of Counties
League of California Cities – Los Angeles County Division
Each Member of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors
Fesia A. Davenport, Los Angeles County Chief Executive Officer
Gateway Cities Council of Governments
San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments
South Bay Cities Council of Governments
Westside Cities Council of Governments
Each City Mayor and City Manager in the County of Los Angeles
Each City Recycling Coordinator in the County of Los Angeles
Each Member of the Los Angeles County Solid Waste Management Committee/
Integrated Waste Management Task Force