



November 30, 2020

The Honorable Garrett L. Wong  
Presiding Judge, Superior Court of California, County of San Francisco  
400 McAllister Street, Room 008  
San Francisco, CA 94102-4512

Dear Judge Wong,

In accordance with Penal Code 933 and 933.05, the following is in response to the 2019-2020 Civil Grand Jury Report, *A Recycling Reality Check: What Actually Happens to Things We Put in Our Blue Recycling Bins*. We would like to thank the members of the 2019-2020 Civil Grand Jury for their interest in ensuring materials placed in the blue bin get properly recycled and recommending outreach efforts to inform San Francisco residents about best recycling practices.

San Francisco is committed to becoming a Zero Waste City, which means implementing policies and delivering programs and services that promote reducing what we send to landfill through the reuse, recycling, and composting of materials. We are proud of the work of our Department of the Environment and of Recology for their efforts in reducing what we dispose. However, the report finds that there is not sufficient information available to the public related to the disposition of material placed in the blue bins. The report also notes that residents struggle to understand what belongs in the blue bin and what does not. We thank the Civil Grand Jury for providing recommendations to encourage San Francisco residents to discard materials properly, which will help the City achieve its zero-waste goal.

**A detailed response from the Mayor's Office and the Department of the Environment is attached.**

Each signatory prepared its own responses and is able to respond to questions related to its respective part of the report. Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on this Civil Grand Jury report.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of London N. Breed in blue ink.

London N. Breed  
Mayor

Handwritten signature of Deborah O. Raphael in blue ink.

Deborah O. Raphael  
Director, Department of the Environment

2019-2020 CIVIL GRAND JURY FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND RESPONSES TO FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Report Title [Publication Date]	F#	Finding (text may be duplicated due to spanning and multiple respondent effects)	Respondent Assigned by CGJ [Response Due Date]	Finding Response (Agree/Disagree)	Finding Response Text
A Recycling Reality Check: What Actually Happens to Things We Put in Our Blue Recycling Bins? [October 1, 2020]	F1	SF Environment and Recology are to be commended for their commitment to maximizing the effectiveness of their recycling efforts. San Francisco sets a positive, powerful example for how a commitment to recycling can pay off in the form of reduced landfill use.	Mayor [November 30, 2020]	Agree with the finding	
A Recycling Reality Check: What Actually Happens to Things We Put in Our Blue Recycling Bins? [October 1, 2020]	F2	SF Environment and Recology do not provide a sufficient amount of timely information to the public related to the disposition of material placed in the blue bins.	Mayor [November 30, 2020]	Agree with the finding	
A Recycling Reality Check: What Actually Happens to Things We Put in Our Blue Recycling Bins? [October 1, 2020]	F3	While significant efforts are being made by SF Environment and Recology, many residents still struggle to understand what belongs in the blue bin and what does not.	Mayor [November 30, 2020]	Agree with the finding	

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Report Title [Publication Date]	R# [for F#]	Recommendation (text may be duplicated due to spanning and multiple respondent effects)	Respondent Assigned by CGJ [Response Due Date]	Recommendation Response (Implementation)	Recommendation Response Text
A Recycling Reality Check: What Actually Happens to Things We Put in Our Blue Recycling Bins? [October 1, 2020]	R1 [for F2]	City government, should establish a web page (available on both Recology SF and SF Environment sites) that summarizes the recent disposition of blue bin material. The website should be updated not less than twice a year, with data for the preceding six months. Key trends should be identified in simple language or graphical elements.	Mayor [November 30, 2020]	Will be implemented	SF Environment and Recology will work together to track disposition. Disposition means the location of the markets that receive Recology's blue bin materials after sorting. SF Environment and Recology will each establish a web page or integrate with existing page(s) on their website to summarize and present in a clear simple manner the market locations and trends where blue bin materials have been sent. The web pages with this information will be up by July 1, 2021 and updated at least every 6
A Recycling Reality Check: What Actually Happens to Things We Put in Our Blue Recycling Bins? [October 1, 2020]	R2 [for F2]	The existing mobile application related to recycling should be updated to provide information that summarizes the recent disposition of blue bin material. The information should be refreshed not less than twice a year, with data for the preceding six months. Key trends should be identified in simple language or graphical elements.	Mayor [November 30, 2020]	Will be implemented	Consistent with Recommendation 1, SF Environment and Recology will work together to track the disposition of blue bin materials and summarize this information in a clear simple manner. SF Environment will work with Recology and help them update their existing mobile application to provide this information by July 1, 2021 and update or refresh this information at least every 6
A Recycling Reality Check: What Actually Happens to Things We Put in Our Blue Recycling Bins? [October 1, 2020]	R3 [for F3]	City government, should enhance citizen educational efforts on what not to place in the blue bins, so that the volume, quality, and associated revenue from blue bin recycling can be increased, while decreasing the confusion some citizens have on this topic.	Mayor [November 30, 2020]	Will be implemented	SF Environment and Recology continue to provide extensive information and education on what belongs in each bin, including what not to place in the blue bins. Extensive research on behavior change shows that telling people what to do is better than telling them what not to do. SF Environment and Recology will continue working together to further clarify what does and does not go into the blue bin through our respective communication channels by July 1, 2021. Other related education efforts, as appropriate, will continue beyond that date.

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