

MEMO

**Date:** February 25, 2013

**To:** ABAG Administrative Committee

**From:** Ceil Scandone, Senior Regional Planner

**Subject:** Bay Area Green Business Program/Hazardous Waste Committee

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**Introduction**

The Bay Area Green Business Program (Program) was initiated in 1996 by ABAG's Hazardous Waste Management Facility Allocation Committee. The Committee was established to respond to AB 2948, legislation that required that counties plan for facilities to handle hazardous wastes generated within their boundaries. Members asked ABAG to craft a regional response, and agreed to pay an annual fee for staff.

The Memorandum of Understanding that established the Committee addressed AB2948, and committed members to pursue pollution prevention programs. The Green Business Program was the first and to date most comprehensive and successful pollution prevention activity. ABAG staff secured the grants used to design the Program and serves as the Regional Coordinator.

By 2003, the Program was expanding outside the region. In 2005, the Bay Area hosted coordinators from around the state to promote consistent operations, which resulted in the formation of the California Green Business Network. In 2007, with funding from the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC), the Network initiated development of a statewide database to manage the process, measure outcomes, and create a Green Business directory. Launched in 2009, that system is now an essential tool.

Efforts to ensure consistent, high-quality operations and report outcomes were rewarded in 2011, when AB 913 was signed by Governor Brown. AB 913 established the California Green Business Program, conferring state recognition on the Network and our Green Businesses. It directed DTSC to continue funding the database and managing expansion. Due to budget problems DTSC recently eliminated staff and financial support. A statewide planning effort is underway to address this situation.

**Current Challenges**

Securing funding for the database all our counties use is critical to the Program's future. Funding for local programs is another key concern. Some Bay Area programs are adequately funded, others just barely surviving, others are on extended hold. ABAG's Regional Coordinator helps to identify and pursue potential funding sources. ABAG has secured annual grants from the BAAQMD and recently secured a contribution from PG & E. Avenues we are pursuing include additional funding from PG & E for energy efficiency activities, and eligibility for funding from cap and trade auction proceeds when those become available.

**Green Business Program Overview**

The Program assists and recognizes small businesses that voluntarily exceed compliance to prevent pollution, conserve resources, and minimize waste (see attached sample checklist). These actions reduce

greenhouse gas emissions. Participants include auto body and repair shops, printers, wineries, restaurants, retail shops, contractors, and landscapers. Local staff ensure that businesses comply with regulations and with assistance from partner agencies and utilities verify on-site that they meet all standards.

The first businesses were recognized in 1997 in Alameda and Napa counties. Other counties joined in subsequent years. Since 2007, all nine counties have offered the Program, at varying levels of staffing based on local funding. Currently, 2,300 firms are certified, including 92 public facilities. All are listed on the Program website at [www.greenbiz.ca.gov](http://www.greenbiz.ca.gov).

The Program design made the Bay Area Green Business Program unique, a distinction it still holds. Apart from other California jurisdictions and Montgomery County, Maryland that launched Programs based on our model, no other similarly robust small business certification program exists. Santa Cruz, Monterey, San Benito, Santa Barbara, Humboldt and Ventura counties, Santa Monica, and Thousand Oaks now offer the Program with Los Angeles set to launch. Together, these jurisdictions cover 38% of California's population.

### **Other Activities**

In pursuit of the Committee's commitment to pollution prevention, staff has undertaken a variety of projects that complement the Green Business Program, and serve all ABAG members. These include organizing workshops on Environmentally Preferable Purchasing, and reporting on efforts to advance Extended Producer Responsibility for electronics and other hazardous products.

### **ABAG Staff Roles**

The Policy Guide for the Green Business Program identifies the following activities for the Regional Green Business Coordinator, with continued oversight from the Committee:

- convene the Committee and Technical Advisory Committee of Local Coordinators
- facilitate review of program activities and materials to ensure consistency
- maintain and distribute program materials
- develop a marketing plan for use by local programs and the region as a whole
- track indicators of success and writing appropriate reports
- write grant proposals and administer grants

In addition to these tasks, ABAG staff has accomplished the following:

- assisted 6 Bay Area counties and others throughout the state to launch Programs
- strengthened relationships with regional partners such as the Bay Area Air Quality Management District, and Pacific Gas & Electric Company
- served as primary interface with legislative staff in writing and gaining support for AB 913, and in the 2004 legislative effort vetoed by Governor Schwarzenegger
- successfully sought funding for Bay Area local programs and the statewide database from P G & E, which included the Program in its 2013/14 CPUC filing
- built and maintains the Bay Area Green Business Program website
- serves on the Steering Committee of the California Green Business Network
- maintains relationships with DTSC, CalRecycle, CARB, US EPA and other agencies
- monitors and reports to the Committee and L&GO on hazardous and universal waste-related legislation