



## Cal Maritime enlists sustainable practices

The California State University Maritime Academy is known for academic excellence in an environment that blends learning on land and sea. In mid-2024, Cal Maritime enlisted the help of Recology Vallejo to reinvigorate recycling and composting on campus.

As Cal Maritime's Environmental Health/Safety Manager and Director of Energy & Sustainability, Craig Dawson is passionate about implementing easy and efficient systems to help the 1000+ students and staff develop good green habits.

"I think recycling and composting more is a great opportunity to divert items from the landfill while helping us save money on disposal," he says. "I've actually been able to create some momentum by increasing the availability of bins in dorms and other buildings."

The school has reduced the number of cardboard-only bins from 16 to 3, converting the rest to mixed recycling. Food scraps and food-soiled paper are put into green bins in the kitchen and dining hall as well as separately collecting all landscape trimmings across campus.



*Business Highlight*



Containers located in dorms and other buildings keep discards sorted.

**Recology Waste Zero Specialists Ana Wong and Elizabeth Talbot meet regularly with students and faculty to teach them how to correctly sort discards.**

Though plastic bags can't be recycled, they line the blue hallway bins so the contents can be easily carried to the larger outside containers. If the bags are clean and dry, they are used again. Otherwise, they are separated from the recycle stream and go into the landfill dumpster. The e-waste/ battery receptacles mean that potentially hazardous waste is separated to be recycled safely.

Dawson says stickers and signage similar to what Recology offers are helpful in honing good habits. The labels' pictures show what items go in which bin, so they bridge any communication gaps between the multiple languages spoken on campus.

It's taking some getting used to, but staff and students are adapting well to the enhanced program. Cal Maritime, we salute your dedication to sorting right! ■

**NO SWEAT SORTING: WHATBIN.COM IS A GREAT TOOL TO KNOW WITHOUT A DOUBT WHAT ITEM GOES IN WHICH BIN.**

If you're unsure where something goes, this Recology web page will tell you which bin — blue for recycling, green for compost, or gray for landfill — to put it in.

It will also provide information on whether it should be scheduled for a bulky item collection or dropped off at a facility.

## DID YOU *know*?

### YOUR PLASTIC BOTTLE CAPS CAN BE RECYCLED!



Once the plastic bottle is empty, screw the cap back on and put it in your blue bin.

Caps must be on the plastic bottle to be recycled, or they fall through the sorting machines and end up in the landfill.

### PET WASTE GOES IN THE LANDFILL BIN

Our cats' and dogs' poop can contain harmful parasites and bacteria. If flushed or composted, these can end up in our waterways or food systems. And no one wants that.



Please put pet waste in the gray bin, even kitty litter that may be labeled "flushable."

### COMPOSTABLE PLASTICS AREN'T

Compostable plastics are marketed as a green alternative to plastics. They are supposed to break down into compost. However, the reality is that we do not yet have the infrastructure to break these materials down.



These items can't be recycled either because they are not plastic and should not be mixed with plastic. Please put them in the landfill bin. Better yet, employ reusable containers and utensils.

### LANDFILL FACTS

**When waste is sent to the landfill, nothing is sorted out.**

This is why it's especially important to keep recyclables, food scraps and other compostables, and hazardous waste out of the gray bin. Landfills can only hold so much material, and when they're filled up, more dump space must be found.

Putting recycling in the landfill means wasting a lot of materials that could be used for new products.

Putting food scraps, yard trimmings, and other compostables in the landfill increases emissions of harmful gases, such as methane.

Putting hazardous materials, such as paints, solvents, and batteries in the landfill can start fires and release toxic compounds into the air.

Sort your discards to get the full benefits of recycling and composting and help protect the environment.

### GREEN WASHING

**Greenwashing is when companies advertise products in a way that makes them seem more environmentally friendly than they are.** This may be done with imagery, vague or leading language, or stated business goals without follow-through.



Businesses may use the color green, use images of plants or trees, or use terms like "all-natural" to better sell their products to sustainable-conscious consumers. Sometimes a company will have some green practices or products to divert attention away from the not-so-green practices happening in operations.

To help your business be better at being green, contact a Recology Waste Zero specialist for information about waste-stream audits, on-site training and presentations, and right-sizing your bins.

### CONTACT US!

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