

# Oakland Indie Alliance

David Tucker  
Waste Management  
172 98<sup>th</sup> Ave  
Oakland CA 94603

Mayor Libby Schaaf  
1 Frank Ogawa Plaza  
Oakland, CA 94610

July 2, 2015

Dear Mr. Tucker and Mayor Schaaf:

We are the Oakland Indie Alliance, representing dozens of Oakland restaurants, which contribute significant economic benefit to the City of Oakland and its residents.

We are shocked by the huge increase in cost for processing our trash and compost under the new waste processing contract with the City of Oakland, which took effect yesterday. We are also confused about the characteristics of the new rate structure which discourage waste diversion from landfill, rather than encouraging it. Our total cost for landfill and compost processing is increasing dramatically, in most cases amounting to additional hundreds of dollars per month. In percentage terms, our cost to process the same amount of compost has increased in many cases by 80% to over 120%, and our landfill rates have increased only slightly less. We get nothing more for this increased expenditure - nothing else about the service has changed.

Up to now, many of us had been customers of Recology's compost service. Some of us chose this service because we care about waste diversion, but some chose it simply because it cost less to compost than to send the same food waste to landfill.

The cost advantage of composting (and recycling) for us has created strong incentives to reduce landfill use, leading to different choices when shopping for supplies and ingredients to reduce waste. As a result, we have become active voices and leaders in training our customers and staff to separate trash from organics, which has a significant multiplying effect through the community. We are proud of this role, proud of our high waste diversion ratios, and want to continue to provide this function. Our own values tell us this is the right choice, and our customers do as well.

We are disappointed that these cost incentives will no longer encourage new business owners to adopt similar strategies. This is a step backwards for Oakland.

We ask that the parties come back together to re-examine commercial landfill and compost rates. Small businesses in Oakland should not disproportionately shoulder the burden of an ill-considered rate structure, as they do in the contract as it stands today.

The undersigned restaurants represent a portion of our Alliance from whom I was able to get signatures with short notice during this holiday week, but be assured that we are not alone in our dissatisfaction, and that many other businesses will find common cause with us as they start to see and understand their new waste processing bills this month.

Signed,  
Gail Lillian, Liba Falafel

With support of:

Actual Café  
Victory Burger  
Pizzaiolo  
Boot&Shoe Service  
Penrose  
Nellie's Soul Food Restaurant & Bar  
Farley's East  
Chop Bar  
The Cook and Her Farmer  
Beauty's Bagel Shop  
Lungomare  
Calavera  
Awaken Café  
Commonwealth Café & Public House  
NIDO  
Homestead  
Oliveto

Blue Heron Catering  
Stag's  
The Lodge  
Dogwood Bar  
Darling's Elixirs  
Caffe 817  
Home of Chicken and Waffles  
A Cote  
Rumbo Al Sur  
Grand Lake Kitchen  
Pican Restaurant  
Donut Farm  
Gregoire  
Modern Coffee  
Bar Cesar  
Caffé Trieste  
Bellanico Restaurant & Wine Bar

Cc: Oakland Councilmember Annie Campbell Washington  
Jody Colley, East Bay Express  
Erin Kilmer Neel, Oakland Grown  
Sam Levin, East Bay Express