

*Cause for Celebration!*

## **Wastes to Landfill in Alameda County Have Declined 50%**

*This analysis is courtesy of Daniel Knapp and Mary Lou Van Deventer of Urban Ore, Inc., a Materials Recovery Enterprise in Berkeley, California, since 1980.*

In 1990, 14 Alameda County cities plus the unincorporated parts of the county sent 2,058,839 tons to landfill. By 2014, landfilling from those jurisdictions had fallen to 1,035,960. **That's a 49.7% reduction in wasting in just 24 years.** Rounding up, wastes were down 50% at the end of 2014. Was this a tipping point, or what?

These numbers come from StopWaste, an Alameda County agency with headquarters in downtown Oakland, created by a citizen's initiative: Measure D. Written by recyclers, Measure D won overwhelmingly in the 1989 election.

According to a StopWaste spreadsheet released in 2015, 8 out of 14 Alameda county cities have eliminated more than 50% of wastes to landfill. If you add unincorporated Alameda County to the list, then **9 of 15 governmental jurisdictions managed to surpass the 50% reduction goal.**

The best number, posted by Union City, was 73%. Union City's landfilled tonnage went from 136,488 in 1990 to 37,208 in 2014. The eight other waste-reduction leaders include Piedmont and Albany, both 68%; Alameda at 63%; Emeryville at 60%; Hayward at 57%; **Berkeley at 56%**; unincorporated Alameda County at 55%; and Oakland at 54%.

The six cities dragging the average down are San Leandro at 48%; Newark at 43%; Pleasanton at 29%; Fremont at 28%; Livermore at 25%; and last and least, Dublin at 17%. Interestingly, Dublin is one of three jurisdictions that filed a lawsuit to nullify Measure D after it passed in 1989. Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund, now EarthJustice, fought the wasters in court and won. The rest is either history or the future.

**These are catastrophic losses of income and disposal market share for the two landfills still operating in Alameda County.**

Please note that this is not what the state calls "diversion," a concept far harder to understand than that of the disappearing "waste stream."

The same StopWaste spreadsheet displays the official "diversion" numbers by jurisdiction on the lower half of the page. The average is 73%. No jurisdiction of the 15 has a "diversion" number lower than Oakland, at 68%. The highest was posted by Emeryville, at 83%.