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Salt Lake City Targets 50 Percent Landfill Diversion by 2015

Mayor Becker Responds to Resident Requests to Streamline City's Recycling Efforts

SALT LAKE CITY – Mayor Ralph Becker today announced proposed changes to waste and recycling programs to reach Salt Lake City's goal of diverting 50 percent of its waste stream away from the landfill by 2015. Committed to extending the life of the city landfill and contributing to positive long term environmental impacts, Mayor Becker and the City Council set the landfill diversion goal last year. The proposed changes include the implementation of best recycling practices and increasing glass recycling drop-off sites which will put the city on target to meet the 50 percent goal.

Under the City's current waste collection services, residents have achieved a diversion and recycling rate of 19 percent. At this current rate, the city landfill is estimated to be at full capacity in 50 years, requiring exploration of waste disposal alternatives such as building a new landfill and transporting waste greater distances. To extend the life of the landfill, the Administration's proposed changes offer more efficient and effective waste management practices. If implemented, these changes alone will increase the City's diversion rate to 42 percent within the next five years. Additional program enhancements will be reviewed over the next several years to achieve a diversion rate of 50 percent.

The Mayor's recommended changes include offering yard waste collection services year-round and collecting leaves and Christmas trees in yard waste containers only. This will divert 24 tons of plastic and bag waste from landfills each year. It will also increase the leaf removal season from three planned pickups per season to weekly yard waste container pickup throughout the fall and winter. The Mayor also plans to distribute approximately 20 additional glass recycling drop-off sites throughout the city. In addition, the proposed program will provide more consistent waste and recycling enforcement, and increase awareness of proper waste disposal practices.

"As avid and committed recyclers, Salt Lake City residents have asked us regularly to expand their waste disposal options and add glass recycling drop-off sites around town," said Mayor Becker. "Our leading waste and recycling services are only effective if we utilize them. These recommended changes provide opportunities for households to increase recycling efforts."

Garbage collection fees are projected to increase by \$1.25 per month starting Jul. 1, 2010 in order to maintain current service levels. The Administration's proposed program will raise service rates by an additional \$3.50 per month for Salt Lake City residents who do not currently participate in the yard waste program. The yard waste program provides residents with an additional waste container to be used only for yard waste such as weeds, branches, leaves, lawn clippings, and fruits and vegetables. Residents who currently subscribe to the yard waste program will only see the standard \$1.25 increase in fees. The Administration's proposal does not alter current waste removal services such as weekly garbage collection and the neighborhood cleanup program. Curbside recycling will continue to be offered for no additional fee.

City residents interested in submitting comments or learning more about the recycling program are invited to attend a public Open House Mar. 4, 2010 at 2:00 pm in Room 148 of the City and County Building, go to the SLC Green website at www.slcgov.com/slccgreen, or send an email to Salt Lake City Recycling Program Manager Debbie Lyons at debbie.lyons@slcgov.com. All public input will be analyzed by the Salt Lake City Green staff and included in their report to the City Council.

About Salt Lake City Green

Salt Lake City Green is comprised of award-winning environmental programs that continue to help conserve resources, reduce pollution, slow climate change and ensure a healthy, sustainable future for Salt Lake City. For more information, visit www.slccgreen.com, the Salt Lake City Green Facebook page, or follow SLCgreen on Twitter.