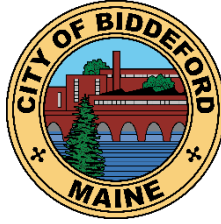

CITY OF BIDDEFORD, MAINE

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PRESS RELEASE

New Recycling Ordinance Aims to Curb Recycling Contamination

Under new rules, repeat offenders may lose access to recycling services.

BIDDEFORD (October 19, 2022) — In its latest efforts to address recycling contamination in Biddeford, the Biddeford City Council approved an amendment to the City’s recycling ordinance that would enable the Public Works Department to revoke recycling services from repeat offenders in a three-strike system.

The first and second times in a 12-month period that a recycling container is found contaminated, the container will not be emptied and the household will receive a notice explaining how to improve their recycling. The third time, a household will no longer receive recycling collection services and will be required to lease a larger trash bin and pay the associated fees. Currently, there is a \$122 yearly fee for an upgraded trash can.

“This change isn’t intended to punish those who make a small accident when judging whether or not something is recyclable,” Jeff Demers, Director of Public Works, said. “This is a mechanism for our staff to be able to address those who use their recycling bin as a second trash can and are not even attempting to recycle correctly. When they misuse the system, these individuals are causing extra expenses for all other households who put in the time and effort to recycle correctly.”

Recycling contamination can cause good, clean recyclable items to end up in the trash. Moreover, the City is charged fees for recycling contamination levels, which make it more expensive to operate the recycling program. The latest audit by Casella Waste Management showed a recycling contamination rate of 19.4%. At this rate, the City of Biddeford pays a fee of \$31.99 per ton of contaminated recycling.

Casella requires all recyclables to be clean of any food, dry, and loose in the bin. Items that are frequently seen in recycling bins that belong in the trash can include plastic bags, electronic items, and bags of trash.

The Public Works Department, in partnership with Casella, has undertaken several educational efforts to refresh residents on the rules of the recycling program, including a bin-tagging exercise this summer to show residents how their recycling measured up to the rules of the program. Residents with too much contamination of recyclables did not have their bin emptied until non-recyclable items were cleaned up.

“Remember, when you’re decided whether to recycle something, the best philosophy to follow is *‘when in doubt, throw it out’*,” Demers said. “You can also give us a call at Public Works at 207-282-1579 and we are happy to answer any questions you may have about whether or not a certain item is recyclable.”

The new recycling ordinance will go into effect in 30 days. A printable list of accepted recyclables can be found on the City of Biddeford website at www.biddefordrecycles.org.

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