



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
 Wednesday, Nov. 22, 2017

CONTACT:
 Paul Brencick at 619-533-4508 or pbrencick@sandiego.gov

San Diego Takes Top Honors Nationally for Leadership in Food Waste Diversion

EPA ALSO RECOGNIZES TWO LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE CITY’S RECYCLING PROGRAM

SAN DIEGO – The City of San Diego has earned top recognition for its leadership in food waste diversion from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The agency awarded the Leadership Award to the City’s Environmental Services Department (ESD), Waste Reduction Division for its innovative and expanding food waste diversion program.

“We remain a model for the rest of the nation in showing the value of recycling and reusing our waste rather than just throwing it away,” said Mayor Kevin L. Faulconer. **“We are on pace to reach our goal of reusing more and more of our trash over the next few decades thanks to our dedicated City staff who continue to develop innovative solutions and create a cleaner future for all San Diegans.”**

This recognition aligns with the City’s bold [Climate Action Plan](#) and [Zero Waste Plan](#), both enacted by the San Diego City Council in 2015. The EPA’s announcement recognized outstanding accomplishments of 16 winners participating in the agency’s annual [Food Recovery Challenge](#). Honorees also include two local organizations currently enrolled in the City’s commercial food waste diversion program.

Narrative Category Winners

- **Leadership: City of San Diego**
- **Source Reduction: Cherokee Point Elementary School (San Diego Unified School District)**
- **Innovation: San Diego International Airport** and Honesdale Roots & Rhythm Music & Arts Festival (Honesdale, Pennsylvania)

San Diego is the only municipality winning a Food Recovery Challenge Narrative Category award this year. According to the EPA, as an endorser in the EPA’s Food Recovery Challenge, San Diego was recognized for its comprehensive food recovery education program for commercial food providers.

In 2016, the program had over 80 participants that composted nearly 8,000 tons of wasted food. Participants included the largest generators of food waste in the City, and all its larger venues, such as the San Diego International Airport, Convention Center, San Diego Zoo and Safari Park and SeaWorld San Diego, three main university campuses, two large military bases, four hospitals, several grocery stores, and the City's largest hotels. Smaller generators participating include corporation cafeterias, restaurants and delis, medium size hotels, organizations and schools.

Most of the food recovery participants in San Diego donated food to people and charitable organizations. Roughly one third of them use "imperfect produce" in their kitchens. During 2016, 17 of the larger food waste generators alone increased their food donation efforts by over 3,000 pounds per week. The program's participants have been featured as models for the whole region and State, and some of its participants have been recognized as pioneers and leaders for their specific industries.

In addition, participant sites are included in the City's commercial wasted food composting program, which assists with identifying the best wasted food collection logistics for the sites, and providing training for their staff. In 2016, approximately 400 workers participated in the City's wasted food diversion program training.

"I am thrilled for the City and for the two local program participants that were also recognized by the EPA," said ESD Environmental Specialist III, Ana Carvalho. "We've put a lot of effort into this food waste recycling program and it is paying off. I am so happy for this recognition for San Diego and its incredible, environmentally-committed business community."

###