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CONTACT:
Paul Brencick at 619-847-6207 or pbrencick@sandiego.gov

City Receives Second EPA Food Recovery Challenge Award for Leadership on Food Waste Diversion Program

HIGHEST PERCENT INCREASE OVER PREVIOUS YEAR

SAN DIEGO – The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recognized the City of San Diego’s Environmental Services Department (ESD) for the second consecutive year with its 2017 Food Recovery Challenge Award. The agency touted the City’s leadership for its Commercial Food Waste Diversion Program.

Food waste is the largest single component of San Diego’s disposed waste stream, representing 15 percent (approximately 200,000 tons) of what is landfilled annually, and this has been a key area of focus for years. The City is well on its way to achieving its ambitious goals to divert 75 percent of all solid waste from going into the Miramar Landfill by the year 2020, 90 percent by 2035 and achieve “zero waste” by 2040. Efforts to reach these goals include increasing its recycling program outreach efforts by promoting the reuse of more materials and diverting more recyclable or reusable waste from the Miramar Landfill, thereby extending the life of the landfill.

“The City has been composting food scraps at the Miramar Greenery since the 1990s,” said ESD Director Mario X. Sierra. “Kudos to the ESD’s Waste Reduction Division for going over and above the call of duty to create and implement food waste diversion programs that set new standards for others to follow. This recognition is directly related to them and their efforts.”

The City’s Commercial Food Waste Diversion Program started as a pilot program with grocery stores and discards from the central produce markets, and then became a permanent program with the advent of military participation. The Navy began recovering and contributing sterilized food waste from the ships returning to port. The City’s food scraps composting program was a pilot program until 2009, when the Miramar Greenery expanded to 75 acres, and food waste became part of its official feedstock. Currently, there are 75 active commercial participants in the Commercial Food Waste Diversion Program.

Please visit the EPA's website at <https://www.epa.gov/sustainable-management-food/about-2017-food-recovery-challenge-national-award-winners> for more details about the award. For more details about the City's recycling programs visit www.recyclingworks.com.

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