

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, Nov. 20, 2025

Used Trash and Recycling Bins Being Recycled into New Products

CITY OF SAN DIEGO PROVIDES PEEK INTO RECYCLING PROCESS FOR MORE THAN 750,000 BLACK AND BLUE CONTAINERS

SAN DIEGO – As the City of San Diego rolls out new gray trash bins to more than 225,000 households eligible for City trash service, you may wonder what happens to the old black trash bins being taken away. Thanks to a collaboration with bin manufacturer [Rehrig Pacific Company](#), the old trash bins (and soon the old blue recycling bins) are being recycled and given a second life.

As new gray trash bins are delivered to homes, old black trash bins are being collected and taken to the Environmental Services Operations Station in Miramar. At the yard, crews clean and disassemble the bins -- wheels and metal bars are removed and sent to regional facilities for recycling and the lids are detached. The plastic recycling process begins with the bins and lids being placed into an industrial chipper. Bins are chipped into small chunks, which drop from a chute into containers. The containers are sent to Rehrig plants, where they are cleaned, pelletized and made into new products.

“By chipping the bins on site, each truck can carry more material, reducing the number of trips required and lowering overall carbon footprint,” said Andrea Deleon, Deputy Director of the [Environmental Services Department](#) Waste Reduction Division. **“Each bin becomes part of a circular process that keeps plastic in use and out of the landfill.”**

Some chipped material is sent to a Rehrig plant, where it re-enters production as brand-new bins or other reusable transport packaging including totes, pallets and trays, creating a true closed-loop cycle.

The rest of the recycled material takes a different path, traveling to toll grinders in California, where it is processed and prepared for use in a wide range of products, such as pails, composite railroad ties and conduit fittings.

These gray and light blue bins have several benefits: Because they are new, they are less prone to breakage (more than 75% of the old bins are 20 years old, well past their service life). They include helpful new trash and recycling labels, making it easier for San Diegans to sort their waste properly. The updated colors help Environmental Services Department drivers quickly identify which containers to service. And

all of the new bins feature scannable tags to help the City track performance and improve service and, in some cases, return a bin to its assigned home if it has found its way onto someone else's property.

The new trash bins (now gray instead of black) are being rolled out to customers now through March 2026. At that time, replacement of lighter blue recycling bins will begin and continue through late summer.

For most customers, the delivery will occur on their regular trash day schedule, and crews will also remove the old black trash bins the same day. Customers can check their delivery date by searching their property address on the City's [bin delivery schedule](#).

For more information about City trash service, visit sandiego.gov/trash.

About the Environmental Services Department:

The Environmental Services Department (ESD) ensures that City of San Diego residents have a clean and safe environment. The department pursues waste management strategies that emphasize waste reduction; recycling and composting; and environmentally sound landfill management.

About Rehrig Pacific

Rehrig Pacific is a leading manufacturer of integrated sustainable solutions for the supply chain and environmental waste industries. Their customer partners include Fortune 500 companies, municipalities, and delivery distributors. Founded in 1913, Rehrig Pacific offers an ecosystem of end-to-end solutions, including returnable plastic products, material handling delivery lifts and sleds, asset-tracking technology, and dedicated service teams. With a focus on innovation, safety, and sustainability, Rehrig Pacific enables the responsible and effective movement of goods, services, and ideas throughout the global supply chain. Learn more at RehrigPacific.com.



###