



# Memorandum

**TO:** HONORABLE MAYOR  
AND CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** Kerrie Romanow

**SUBJECT:** GARBAGE RATE ASSISTANCE

**DATE:** May 8, 2015

Approved

*D. D. SyL*

Date

*5/8/15*

## INFORMATION

This memorandum provides an update on the proposed elimination of the Low Income Rate Assistance (LIRA) and Medical Exemption Rate Reduction Assistance (MERRA) Residential Garbage Rate Assistance programs in the 2015-2016 Proposed Operating Budget.

On September 17, 2013, City Council approved the service delivery strategy to collect Single-Family Dwelling (SFD) Recycle Plus payments through Santa Clara County's property tax collection program. Impacts of this strategy were reviewed at the Public Safety, Finance and Strategy Support Committee in September 2012 and at the October 16, 2012 and January 8, 2013 City Council meetings. Collecting SFD bills through the County would make it administratively difficult for the City to continue to manage these rate assistance programs. Furthermore, no other utility systems in the City currently offer rate assistance. As a result, these programs were proposed to be eliminated. Due to the billing shift to the County, late fees that have been collected through this billing system, and which have served as an unrestricted source of funding for several programs including LIRA and MERRA, will no longer be received.

The attached letters regarding the proposed elimination of LIRA and MERRA were also translated into Spanish and Vietnamese and were mailed to customers on May 7, 2015. The letter informs customers of the proposed program elimination, provides an option for eligible customers to downsize their garbage service level, and invites them to provide input about the proposed rate assistance program eliminations at the May 12 and June 8, 2015 public hearings on the 2015-2016 Proposed Operating Budget. These letters are the second notice sent to the public on this proposal; the first notice went to rate payers in March 2014.

/s/

KERRIE ROMANOW

Director, Environmental Services Department

Attachments – LIRA and MERRA Garbage Rate Assistance elimination letters

For questions, please contact Jo Zientek, Deputy Director, Environmental Services Department, at (408) 535-8557.

May 7, 2015

«ENTITY\_NAME»  
«MAIL\_ADDR»  
«MAIL\_CITY», «MAIL\_STATE» «MAIL\_ZIP»

**RE: Proposed Garbage Rate Change at:  
Cambio Propuesto a Tarifa de Servicio de Basura en: -- Đề Nghị Thay Đổi Mức Giá Rác tại:**  
«MAIL\_ADDR», «MAIL\_CITY»

Dear Garbage Rate Assistance Customer,

As part of the City's 2015-2016 Proposed Operating Budget, the Low Income Rate Assistance (LIRA) Program is proposed to end on June 30, 2015. If approved by the City Council, your Recycle Plus garbage and recycling service rate will change to the standard rate that all customers pay, based on the size of your black garbage cart. Potential changes to the LIRA program were previously mailed to all property owners in a rate notice sent on March 17, 2014.

You may keep your current garbage service and pay the standard rate, or you may downsize to a smaller garbage cart and pay a lower garbage cart rate. A 32-gallon garbage cart is the minimum service level for single family households. If you wish to downsize your garbage cart, call the Customer Contact Center at (408) 535-3500 **by June 17, 2015**. Go to [www.sjenvironment.org/utilityrates](http://www.sjenvironment.org/utilityrates) to view current Recycle Plus rates.

You may provide input on the 2015-2016 Proposed Operating Budget and the LIRA Program at either of the public budget hearings at the San José City Council on:

**Tuesday, May 12, 2015**  
and  
**Monday, June 8, 2015**  
San José City Hall Council Chambers  
200 East Santa Clara Street  
San José, CA 95113

Go to [www.sanjoseca.gov/councilagenda](http://www.sanjoseca.gov/councilagenda) to view the agenda. Agendas are posted 10 days prior to the council meeting.

**For more information about your garbage and recycling services:**

- Go to [www.sjenvironment.org/curbside-recycling](http://www.sjenvironment.org/curbside-recycling)
- Email [customerservice@sanjoseca.gov](mailto:customerservice@sanjoseca.gov)
- Call the Customer Contact Center at (408) 535-3500

Sincerely,

Jo Zientek, Deputy Director, Environmental Services Department

May 7, 2015

«ENTITY\_NAME»  
«MAIL\_ADDR»  
«MAIL\_CITY», «MAIL\_STATE» «MAIL\_ZIP»

**RE: Proposed Garbage Rate Change at:  
Cambio Propuesto a Tarifa de Servicio de Basura en: -- Đề Nghị Thay Đổi Mức Giá Rác tại:**  
«MAIL\_ADDR», «MAIL\_CITY»

Dear Garbage Rate Assistance Customer,

As part of the City's 2015-2016 Proposed Operating Budget, the Medical Exemption Rate Reduction Assistance (MERRA) Program is proposed to end on June 30, 2015. If approved by the City Council, your Recycle Plus garbage and recycling service rate will change to the standard rate that all customers pay, based on the size of your black garbage cart. Potential changes to the MERRA program were previously mailed to all property owners in a rate notice sent on March 17, 2014.

You may keep your current garbage service and pay the standard rate, or you may downsize to a smaller garbage cart and pay a lower garbage cart rate. A 32-gallon garbage cart is the minimum service level for single family households. If you wish to downsize your garbage cart, call the Customer Contact Center at (408) 535-3500 **by June 17, 2015**. Go to [www.sjenvironment.org/utilityrates](http://www.sjenvironment.org/utilityrates) to view current Recycle Plus rates.

You may provide input on the 2015-2016 Proposed Operating Budget and the MERRA Program at either of the public budget hearings before the San José City Council on:

**Tuesday, May 12, 2015**  
and  
**Monday, June 8, 2015**  
San José City Hall Council Chambers  
200 East Santa Clara Street  
San José, CA 95113

Go to [www.sanjoseca.gov/councilagenda](http://www.sanjoseca.gov/councilagenda) to view the agenda. Agendas are posted 10 days prior to the council meeting.

**For more information about garbage and recycling:**

- Go to [www.sjenvironment.org/curbside-recycling](http://www.sjenvironment.org/curbside-recycling)
- Email [customerservice@sanjoseca.gov](mailto:customerservice@sanjoseca.gov)
- Call the Customer Contact Center at (408) 535-3500

Sincerely,

Jo Zientek, Deputy Director, Environmental Services Department