

**University of Colorado Student Government**

**Legislative Council**

February 1, 2015

**Sponsored by:**

Katie Raitz Representative At-Large

Boneth Ahaneku Environmental Board Co-Chair

Zoë Sigle Sustainability Think Tank

Hannah Becker-Uncapher Sustainability Think Tank Bridger Ruyle Engineering Senator

Elizabeth LeNard Sustainability Think Tank

**Authored by:**

Sam Kaiser CUSG Director of Sustainability

**A Resolution in Support of the Upcoming City Ordinance to Mandate Commercial Source-Separation**

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**Resolution History**

In 2006, the City of Boulder, seeking to continue their nationally-recognized reputation as a leader in municipal sustainability, created the Master Plan for Waste Reduction. The Master Plan calls for a waste diversion rate of 85% by 2017.[[1]](#footnote-1) This plan relies on a $1.2 million annual budget, with the intention of gradually increased said budget to an annual $1.88 million. Unfortunately, the city as a whole only reached a 33% diversion rate by 2013.[[2]](#footnote-2) This is despite the fact that due to Boulder’s successful curbside recycling and composting program, single-family homes in Boulder have a diversion rate of 59%, the highest in the country. Boulder businesses actually generate more than two-thirds of the city’s landfill waste each year: 3 bags of trash for every one produced by Boulder homes.[[3]](#footnote-3) The Master Plan for Waste Reduction calls and budgets for a commercial source-separation ordinance in case commercial waste is still lowering overall Boulder diversion rates, which it is. Now, local nonprofit Eco-Cycle is working with the Boulder City Council to pass a version of this ordinance, culminating in a City Council meeting on February 17, 2015. Eco-Cycle is one of the largest non-profit recyclers in U.S. For 37 years, it has operated in the Boulder community, bringing recycling collecting and processing, local educational programs, and local government advising and agency.[[4]](#footnote-4) The Council and Eco-Cycle have called for community input, including from CUSG, which represents the students of CU in matters including progressive sustainability policy on campus and in the community.

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**Resolution Summary**

This resolution declares CUSG’s support of the proposed Boulder commercial source- separation ordinance. It also states CUSG’s intention to have input in the implementation process of this ordinance to maximize its effectiveness, and to send representatives to speak at the 2/17 City Council meeting to emphasize this intention.

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**Whereas,** the City of Boulder Master Plan for Waste Reduction set the goal of reaching an 85% waste diversion rate by 2017[[5]](#footnote-5);

**Whereas,** the University of Boulder is a part of the greater Boulder community, as well as a leader in sustainability innovation, including a mandate to reach 90% campus waste diversion rate by 2020[[6]](#footnote-6);

**Whereas**, the University’s waste diversion rate sits at 44% and can be improved by this business ordinance[[7]](#footnote-7);

**Whereas**, CUSG has consistently been a leader of CU’s sustainability innovation, including clear goals for waste reduction stated in 68LCB12, 72LCB15, and 77LCB05;

**Whereas,** Boulder businesses recycle and compost only 28% of their waste, compared to 59% diverted from single-family homes[[8]](#footnote-8);

**Whereas,** if all local businesses are required to recycle, tonnage of recycling per year is expected to double from about 10,000 tons to 20,000 tons[[9]](#footnote-9);

**Whereas,** recycling these additional materials could reduce local greenhouse gas emissions by as much as 36,600 metric tons of carbon dioxide annually;

**Whereas,** more than 20% of the U.S. population currently lives in a community that requires businesses to recycle and/or compost[[10]](#footnote-10);

**Whereas,** a 2013 Western Disposal survey of commercial customers indicated support for a stronger approach to encourage more recycling and compost;

**Whereas,** preliminary information gathered by the CUSG Director of Sustainability indicates that some elements of the ordinance, including waste container signage, infrastructure alterations, and monitoring and enforcement policies need additional input that CUSG can and should provide;

**Whereas,** Eco-Cycle has requested our support as an influential part of the Boulder community;

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**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Legislative Council of the University of Colorado Student Government, that:**

**Section 1:** CUSG officially supports the upcoming City Council commercial source-separation ordinance for its potential to increase the Boulder waste diversion rate and lower local greenhouse gas emissions.

**Section 2:** The Legislative Council gives permission for the CUSG Director of Sustainability and other representatives to speak on behalf of CUSG at the 2/17 City Council meeting, with the caveat that this contribution is reviewed and approved beforehand by the Tri-Executives and other representatives they deem necessary.

**Section 3:** The CUSG will actively continue to work with the City Council and Eco-Cycle to provide input for the implementation of this new ordinance, should it pass. The Sustainability Think Tank will collaborate with City Council and/or Eco-Cycle representatives, and will report findings and progress to Legislative Council.

**Section 4:** This bill will take effect upon final passage in Legislative Council and upon either obtaining the signature of two Tri-Executives and the Legislative Council President or the lapse of six days without action by the Tri-Executives.

1. https://www-static.bouldercolorado.gov/docs/zero-waste-reduction-master-plan-1-201305071148.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. City of Boulder 2013 Waste Diversion Data [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Calculated by Eco-Cycle from City of Boulder 2013 Waste Diversion Data [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. http://ecocycle.org/aboutus [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. https://www-static.bouldercolorado.gov/docs/zero-waste-reduction-master-plan-1-201305071148.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. http://www.colorado.edu/masterplan/plan/For%20Web/Section%20IIIforWeb.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. https://stars.aashe.org/institutions/university-of-colorado-at-boulder-co/report/2014-09-22/OP/waste/OP-23/ [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. City of Boulder 2013 Waste Diversion Data [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Zero Waste Evaluation Study: Final Report, Kessler Consulting, 2013 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Eco-Cycle Cooling the Climate through Boulder Business Recycling Fact Sheet [↑](#footnote-ref-10)