Date: April 3, 2020
To: Mayors, Councilmembers and Supervisors in Franchised Municipalities
RE: NCN COVID-19 Update – Status of Waste Management Services

Mayors, Councilmembers and Supervisors,

This has been an historic three weeks and as we enter the weekend, I wanted to update you on Waste Management of Northern California-Nevada’s (NCN) efforts in your community. Collectively, we are dealing with an unprecedented event that is forcing us to take unprecedented steps to ensure we can meet our communities’ health and safety needs for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the first shelter-in-place order was issued on March 16, to today, NCN continues to provide all residential, commercial and roll-off collection of trash, recycling and organics/green waste in all jurisdictions.

The orders issued by federal, state and local governments constitute a force majeure event. Maintaining these essential services for the duration of the pandemic is our goal. We’ve had to make some hard choices to protect the health and safety of our employees, customers and communities, and to ensure we have the personnel and resources to maintain services. While we’ve been communicating these changes to public works staff, city managers and regulators, I want to provide you a status report as we settle into another 30 days of shelter-in-place restrictions.

Health & Safety Primary Focus

Every operational change we’ve made is guided, first and foremost, by what is in the best interest of our employees, customers and the communities we serve. Achieving appropriate social distancing has resulted in significant changes to our workplace across North America, including:

- Closing call centers and establishing a virtual platform. This herculean task required purchasing thousands of pieces of equipment, including headsets and laptops, and training employees in less than a week so all customer service representatives could work from home.
• Today 20,000 Waste Management employees are working from home, serving our customers while following shelter in place orders.

• Another 25,000 Waste Management employees are staffing collection and transfer trucks, operating heavy equipment at our transfer stations and landfills and working on sort lines at our material recovery facilities (MRFs).

• In Northern California-Nevada, we have 2,500 employees, 2,000 of whom are working on the front line delivering essential services and cannot work from home.
  o Special social distancing protocols have been implemented at our sites along with cleaning procedures and additional personal protective equipment (PPE) for these employees.

• Where social distancing between staff and customers could not be achieved, we made the hard choice to close some facilities to the public, including offices, buy-back recycling sites and bill pay stations. A complete list of facilities and services is available at wm.com/alerts – scroll down and select “California” or “Nevada.”

Maintaining Essential Services

Recycling Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs)

• Effective March 30, we made the difficult decision to shut or significantly reduce the recycling sorting capacity at our five MRFs in NCN to ensure social distancing, reduce the potential of a COVID-19 outbreak at our sites and in the community.

• WM MRF employees affected by this restructuring are guaranteed up to 40 hours of pay a week and continued health and welfare benefits during this temporary closure or processing reduction.

• It is our hope this short-term disruption in recycling processing is overshadowed by the continued health and safety of our employees and communities.

• We can’t overstate our commitment to recycling and our desire to maintain the curbside collection experience our customers expect. We understand the important role recycling plays in our environment, economy and collective social contract. We continue to provide curbside recycling collection to maintain the ‘recycle right’ habits we have collectively worked hard to foster.

Bulky and Excess Waste Collection

• Drivers are on the front line of this pandemic providing an essential service.
• We must prioritize the collection of trash, recyclables and green waste.
• To ensure adequate personnel each day, we are eliminating bulky pickup and the collection of waste not containerized.
• We are already seeing a 15% increase in residential trash disposal volume from the effect of shelter in place.
• To help customers manage this excess waste, we will collect it in personal containers set out with their WM carts on collection day.
• We intend to maintain separate collection of trash, recyclables and green waste/organics, and encourage customers to continue to Recycle Right.
Contingency Plans

- Every NCN hauling district, processing facility and landfill has contingency plans for maintaining service, backed by the company’s overall business continuity plan and leadership task force groups.
- Our collection contingency plan prioritizes critical services like hospitals, first responders, governmental buildings, and essential private businesses. To date, every route has been serviced and our goal is to maintain this service record.
- As North America’s largest waste management company, we have built-in redundancies that allow us to staff our facilities hit by hurricanes and tornados. While unprecedented, we bring the same commitment to working through the COVID-19 crisis.

Commitment to Communication

If you would like to be added to our NCN COVID-19 Update distribution list, please email NCNCovid19@wm.com. To receive service updates, please visit wm.com and select “My WM” on the righthand side of the tool bar to sign up for text, email or phone notices. Finally, if you have any questions about our COVID-19 Update, please email us at NCNCovid19@wm.com and our COVID-19 Communication Task Force will respond.

Thank you for your understanding. We appreciate your support of our drivers and employees on the frontline and look forward to resuming our normal routine as quickly as possible.

Sincerely,


Barry Skolnick
President of the above referenced legal entities