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Junk mail tree takes life at Recycle Central

--More than 110 Bay Area cities and counties launch campaign to stop junk mail

San Francisco—In an effort to reduce the amount of waste generated in the form of junk mail, a coalition of Bay Area cities and counties has launched the “Stop Junk Mail” campaign. The campaign will feature radio and print advertising, offering an easy to use “stop junk mail kit.” There is also an easy to use website, stopjunkmail.org, and Bay Area residents can get a junk mail form through the hotline, 877-STOPWASTE (786-7927).

“Tons of junk mail end up in Bay Area waste stream,” said campaign coordinator Catherine Pandori. “It’s good to recycle your junk mail, but it’s better for you and for the environment not to get unwanted mail in the first place.”

The campaign kicked off Thursday, January 26, with the unveiling of a 17-foot pine tree made from colorful junk mail. To underscore the massive amount of unwanted mail generated each year, Bay Area artist Dio Mendoza is displaying the tree, measured 10 feet in diameter, at Recycle Central at Pier 96, where piles of junk mail paper marketing materials are sorted into one-ton bales and shipped to various paper mills for recycling. Mendoza collected junk mail from several friends over the course of a month to create this project. “It’s amazing to me to see how much paper in the form of junk mail gets piled up in the recycling facility every day. I hope this project will show people how unnecessary junk mail is to our society and to our environment,” explains the artist.

The unveiling of the junk mail tree also featured special guest speakers including artist Dio Mendoza, leaders from San Francisco and Santa Clara, representatives from Norcal Waste Systems, Inc., and Ecology Center in Berkeley.

Every year, nearly 42 billion pieces of unsolicited mail in the form of catalogs, advertisements, flyers, brochures, and other promotional materials are processed and delivered to households and businesses across the United States—requiring around 100 million trees to be cut down. Excess mail consumes our resources, time, and money—about \$320 million annually nationwide in disposal costs alone.

The Junk Mail Reduction Campaign is a project of BayROC, the Bay Area Recycling Outreach Coalition. It offers residents and businesses simple tips and solution to reducing unsolicited mail. A “Stop Junk Mail Kit” provides contact numbers and pre-addressed postcards to organizations designed to protect consumer privacy. BayROC is a coalition of 110 cities and counties in and around the Bay Area dedicated to saving and conserving our natural resources.

Junk mail facts:

- If you take the 42 billion pieces of junk mail received by Americans every year and put them end-to-end, they would circle the Earth 240 times.
- If you put them end- to-end into space, they would stretch to the Moon and back - five times!
- If you assume the average piece of junk mail weighs 2 ounces (which is conservative, considering the weight of catalogs), the junk mail Americans receive every year would weigh a total of 2.6 million tons a year –almost 3 times the weight of the Golden Gate bridge (which weighs 894,500 tons).

For more information: www.stopjunkmail.org or 877-STOPWASTE (786-7927).

