



## ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT

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## Notice of Intent to Comply (NOIC) - Attachment 2

### Instructions

*A description of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on compliance.*

### Impacts

The COVID-19 pandemic has seriously impacted El Dorado County's ability to implement various state laws, including SB 1383. Although the jurisdiction has taken measures to work around these problems, some remain complex challenges.

A fundamental problem during the pandemic has been a *shortage of staff*. Staff's time off to either quarantine, take care of family, or remote work has led to slowed productivity to implement SB 1383. As a result, the pandemic has made it challenging to implement in-person tasks like site visits, specific meetings, and route audits.

Another issue that has arisen has been *hiring new staff*. The County's Human Resources Department has been hindered by the pandemic as well have staffing issues of their own. With a lengthier hiring process and difficulty attracting potential candidates given the competitive job market environments, vacant positions have been difficult to fill. For example, on 8/25/2020, a newly created sustainability coordinator position was established to perform the duties necessary to, develop, organize, implement, and promote programs required for compliance with SB 1383 regulations was finally filled in November 2021.

The pandemic has caused several issues with the jurisdiction's revenue stream, mainly due to a drop in commerce. This drop in revenue has limited the jurisdiction's ability to acquire staff and equipment. The most significant consequence has been an inability to *implement the purchasing requirements* of SB 1383. Allocating sparse funds to purchase organic material that the jurisdiction is struggling to find a use for seems almost impossible at this time.

Another issue that has come to bear is the legacy waste laws such as AB 1826 – Mandatory Commercial Organics Recycling (MORE). The County had acceptable compliance rates in the adoption of this law. The pandemic made it all but impossible to visit and onboard food facilities into the program. After CalRecycle lowered the threshold in the middle of the pandemic from 4-yards to 2-yards, the County's compliance rates dropped dramatically. The County resumed work on implementing

AB 1826 in June 2021, but the renewed threat of the pandemic has continued to hinder our ability to implement it. Due to the compliance rate drops, EMD was deemed to be in non-compliance with AB 1826 in November 2021. Staff have redirected focus and efforts on compliance with AB 1826 instead of working on the implementation of SB 1383 given our limited staffing resources.

Finally implementation of SB1383 regulations will likely result in raising solid waste rates during a time when individuals on fixed incomes and food services facilities have been hit extremely hard by the pandemic.