

This document is an extract of a larger publication.

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- The first meeting to set up the mandated Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) per AB 2083 (passed in 2019) was not held until February 2024, a year after the MOU was put in place in Plumas County and 3 months after the GJ started its investigation of CPS.
- There is no reference in the policy and procedures manual about AB 2083 or the Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2023.
- There has been no education or training concerning the Memorandum of Understanding.
- There have been discussions about AB 2083 and the Memorandum of Understanding at staff meetings which the Director of Social Services did not attend.
- Employee's names are sometimes used in a P/P, rather than a title or job description.

Suspected Child Abuse Report process not followed

A Suspected Child Abuse Report (SCAR) is many times the way in which a child is introduced to CPS. Anyone can send a SCAR to CPS, but most times they are turned into CPS by someone who has daily contact with the child such as by a designated mandated reporter^{viii} at their workplace, or by employees of an agency that is part of the MOU. There does not appear to be any process in place at CPS to report back to the person who turns in a SCAR, even though the MOU would allow it. There have been incidents where the SCAR indicated that a crime might have been committed against a child, yet it was not forwarded to the Plumas County Sheriff's Office. This is extremely important as there have been cases where criminal charges were later brought against the people reported in the SCAR, and if the Sheriff's Office is not notified in a timely manner, it might hinder an investigation. In other instances, pictures of physical abuse have been documented in the SCAR, yet it was never sent to the Sheriff's office. In these cases, the Sheriff's Office received the SCAR only after making a request for it after receiving other relevant information.

An older Policy (Emergency Response Services March 14, 2007) has a procedures page with a check-off box that states that SCARS will be forwarded to the Sheriff's Office. A more recent Memorandum (February 29, 2024) also states SCARS will be forwarded to the Sheriff's Office. However, within 14 days of this Memorandum being placed in the P/P manual there was at least one SCAR not forwarded to the Sheriff's Office where a child was put in extreme danger. After the Sheriff's Office requested the SCAR the District Attorney's office informed the CPS department that criminal charges were being placed against the person mentioned in the SCAR. However, the overseeing agency, Social Services continued to state that "all SCARs are not forwarded to the Sheriff's Office", and referred to examples of information found in SCARs that would not prompt a referral to law enforcement. The criterion for forwarding a SCAR to the Sheriff's office remains unclear.

CPS Reports to the Public not updated

The Social Services Department has a website^{ix} where its report to the Board of Supervisors and the public are posted. There is a statement written in 2016 describing a quarterly report of social services trends.

- “Quarter Ending: March 31, 2016” “Social Services Trends is a quarterly report to the Plumas County Board of Supervisors and members of the public”.

After the GJ pointed out that the website was out of date by 7 years it now includes the updated statement.

- “Semi-Annual Ending: June 30, 2023” “Social Services Trends is a semi-annual report to the Plumas County Board of Supervisors and members of the public.

There is no report from March 2016 to June 2023 that the GJ was able to find at the Website or mentioned in any Board of Supervisors (BOS) open meetings, on how the department was functioning. When the GJ last looked at the Website the most recent report June 2023 does not meet the “Semi-annual” definition since there is no report for January 2024 and as of May 2024 the report is 5 months past due.

CPS Staffing shortage

There has been a shortage of staffing throughout the county including CPS. The Director of CPS discussed this with the BOS during his closed session evaluation process. However, the GJ could not find any information where it was discussed at any public BOS meetings. There is also nothing in the June 2023 report indicating that CPS is not able to provide services due to staff shortages or financial department needs. Also, no interviewee from CPS stated that lack of manpower or finances were a significant problem at the department.

In conclusion

CPS has been negligent in implementing AB2083 which allows them to share information about CPS clients with many agencies while guaranteeing the privacy rights of the children. This lack of transparency serves to raise questions as to why. It also leaves children at risk when law enforcement does not know a possible crime has been committed against a child.

Findings

- F1. The CPS Policies and Procedures do not include concise and usable information leaving staff little direction how to perform their job duties.
- F2. There are no Policies/Procedures on training or education of CPS Staff Members.
- F3. CPS does not follow what is outlined in policy leaving the manual with no value.
- F4. The Policies/Procedures manual does not have any Policy/Procedure on the specific handling of SCARS.
- F5. The Director of Social Services is not involved with the CPS department leaving them with little oversight and guidance.

Recommendations

- R1. The Grand Jury recommends that the CPS policy manual be completely reviewed and rewritten including an Index, Table of Contents and be electronically available by June 2025.
- R2. The Grand Jury recommends that the CAO review the administrative structure of the Department of Social Services to assure adequate supervision is provided by December 2024.
- R3. The Grand Jury recommends that the website include a complete report to the BOS and the public on the status of CPS by October 2024.
- R4. The Grand Jury recommends that the MOU currently in place with other agencies be followed as written.

Request for Response

Pursuant to Penal Code 933 and 933.05, the Civil Grand Jury requests responses as follows:

From the Plumas County Board of Supervisors within 90 days:

Recommendations 1, 3, 4.

Endnotes

ⁱhttps://digitaldemocracy.calmatters.org/bills/ca_201720180ab2083

ⁱⁱ<https://www.plumascounty.us/239/Children-Family-Services>

ⁱⁱⁱ Plumas County Memorandum of Understanding.

^{iv} <https://www.childwelfare.gov/resources/definitions-child-abuse-and-neglect-california/>

^v [https://www.cwda.org/sites/main/files/file-attachments/ab_2083__toward_effective_children_and_youth_system_of_care_1.45pm_draft3.pdf?1604511094#:~:text=Assembly%20Bill%202083%20\(Chapter%20815%2C%20Statutes%20of,foster%20care%20who%20have%20experienced%20severe%20trauma.](https://www.cwda.org/sites/main/files/file-attachments/ab_2083__toward_effective_children_and_youth_system_of_care_1.45pm_draft3.pdf?1604511094#:~:text=Assembly%20Bill%202083%20(Chapter%20815%2C%20Statutes%20of,foster%20care%20who%20have%20experienced%20severe%20trauma.)

^{vi} <https://www.chhs.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/AB-2083-Multiyear-Plan-for-Increasing-Capacity.pdf>

^{vii} Subpoena

^{viii} <https://www.plumascounty.us/239/Children-Family-Services>

^{ix} <https://www.plumascounty.us/94/Social-Services>

The Many Faces of Plumas County Recycling

(California Redemption Value (CRV), Organic Waste and Inorganic Waste)

Summary

In the last few years there has been a reduction of CRV recycling centers in Plumas County for a number of reasons. Some private recycling centers have closed their doors, in one case the owner-operator passed away and the business was shut down. Reduced prices for CRV plastics have caused a glut of the material reducing the demand so many private recyclers have called it quits. Some stores refuse to take large quantities of bottles or cans putting the burden on the consumer to find a location that will take their CRV material. During the Plumas County Grand Jury (GJ) investigation into understanding more about CRV recycling we found the following:

- 1) It is not economical for many Plumas County citizens to drive to CRV redemption centers to receive the deposits for their bottles or cans. Many residents live outside the town or city limits.
- 2) There is a lack of readily available information about CRV, organic waste policies and inorganic waste being addressed and mandated by the California Senate on the Plumas County website.

This Grand Jury report addresses issues about recycling in Plumas County CRV, organic waste and inorganic waste.

Background

Questions were raised about California Redemption Value (CRV) recycling in Plumas County. Where can you go to redeem your CRV materials, why are some areas offering recycle bins to collect CRV and what actually happens to that CRV material?

During our investigation into CRV recycling the Grand Jury discovered that there is a bigger issue regarding recycling in Plumas County and California in general.

Methodology

The Grand Jury interviewed businesses that are currently handling waste products in Plumas County.ⁱ

We accumulated information about local businesses that handle CRV material, organic waste and inorganic waste products.ⁱⁱ

The Grand Jury also interviewed a member of Public Works department for Plumas County who informed us about California Senate Bill (SB) 1383.ⁱⁱⁱ

Other research was done online and websites were visited^{iv} and documents were procured for review.^v

Discussion

CRV can be bottles, aluminum cans, aluminum scraps, copper wire, etc., to see where you can redeem CRV bottles and cans (see endnotes).^{vi}

Other forms of recycling include organic material and inorganic material.

Organic waste is bio-degradable material that comes from plants or animals. It also can be food-stained paper or food soiled paper. Potato peels, grass clippings, pine needles and left over foods such as chicken bones and meat scraps are also organic waste. Some organic waste is currently recovered by local organizations.^{vii}

Inorganic waste can be Tires, Mattresses, Paint, Electronics, etc., which are sometimes handled when Plumas County receives grants to offer removal of these items. Occasionally, some local businesses will accept these items too.^{viii}

CRV is removed from Plumas County and transported to Nevada and Sacramento where it is separated at Material Recovery Facilities (MRF)'s the dirty material go into landfills and the clean material is recycled.^{ix} Due to the small number of Plumas County residents, it is not cost effective to separate CRV in Plumas County. Plumas County has an exemption because its population is less than 70,000 which allows material to be taken elsewhere to be sorted or disposed.^x

Legislation that may affect Plumas County Residents

The State of California has enacted Senate Bill (SB 1383) the goal was to reduce landfill organic waste by 75% by 2025 (from the 2014 levels). It's estimated that 20 million tons will be diverted from landfills. The legislation aims to help reduce greenhouse gases and potentially recover as much as 20% of edible food that can be redirected to charitable organizations.^{xi} SB 1383 has a

number of implications for both private and governmental agencies. Household residences are expected to participate in SB 1383 as well.

Assembly Bill 2902 (AB 2902) was created to address the Senate Bill 1383. AB 2902 requests exemptions for counties with less than 70,000 residents. Those counties currently have an exemption from SB 1383 until January 1st, 2027. There are 19 counties that have an exemption, combined they produce less than 5% of all organic waste in California. The Proposed Assembly bill 2902 will provide further exemptions but mainly address curbside pickup while other requirements will still apply.^{xii}

Supermarkets, food distributors, restaurants, hotels, health stores, large venues etc. are examples of “Food Generators”. Food generators are expected to distribute left over edible food from grocery stores, restaurants and hotels etc. to food recovery organizations. They are also expected to distribute non-edible organic material that is usable as animal feed.

Findings

- F1. There are too few CRV recycling locations in Plumas County making it difficult for citizens to easily redeem CRV bottles and cans.
- F2. There is a lack of readily available information about CRV, organic waste and in-organic waste policies being addressed and mandated by the California Senate on the Plumas County website.

Recommendations

- R1. The Grand Jury recommends that the Plumas County Public Works should update their website to include more information about how and where CRV recycling is done by Dec. 31, 2024.
- R2. The Grand Jury recommends that the Plumas County Public Works website should provide information about proposed changes in recycling laws SB 1383 and AB 2902 by Dec. 31, 2024.

Endnotes

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- ⁱ Plumas County Department of public works administrative personnel; Intermountain Disposal administrative personnel.
- ⁱⁱ Plumas County Department of public works administrative personnel; Intermountain Disposal administrative personnel.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Plumas County Department of public works administrative personnel; Intermountain Disposal administrative personnel.
- ^{iv} Little Hoover Commission <https://www.lhc.ca.gov>; California recycle Home page found at calrecycle.ca.gov; Rural county representatives of California found at <https://www.rcrcnet.org>; Intermountain disposal found at <https://www.intermountaindisposal.com>; Waste management found at <https://www.wm.com>; Plumas county department of public works found at <https://www.plumascounty.us/92/Public-Works>; Plumas county department of environmental health found at <https://www.plumascounty.us/174/Environmental-Health>; Plumas county news found at <https://www.plumasnews.com/plumas-residentsexempt-From-food-recycling-for-now/>
- ^v Senate bill 1383 approved by governor on 9/19/2016 filed with Secretary of State 9/19/2016; Assembly bill 2902 introduced 2/15/24, currently in assembly appropriations Committee 5/1/2024; Assembly bill 2902 letter of support by Plumas County board of supervisors approved 4/2/2024; Feather River disposal contract with Plumas County in 2017 for 10-year duration; Intermountain disposal contract with Plumas County in 2017 for 10-year duration; Plumas County code Chapter 14 of title 6, ordinance #23-1147, Adopted 4/18/23; Resolution #21-8642 Plumas County exemption from requirements of mandated Organic collection services 12/7/2021; Cal Recycle SB 1383 waiver approval letter approved 1/1/2022; Senate bill 1383 found at <https://www.ww2.arc.ca.gov>; Assembly bill 2902 found at <https://www.ww2.arc.ca.gov>
- ^{vi} Greenville Transfer Station, Quincy Redemption Center, Safeway.
- ^{vii} Food recovery organizations in Plumas County; Greenville food bank; CAN-community assistance network; Plumas crisis center; Portola resource center.
- ^{viii} Plumas County Department of public works administrative personnel; Intermountain Disposal administrative personnel.
- ^{ix} Plumas County Department of public works administrative personnel; Intermountain Disposal administrative personnel.
- ^x Plumas County Department of public works administrative personnel; Intermountain Disposal administrative personnel.
- ^{xi} Senate bill 1383 went into effect 1-1-22.
- ^{xii} Assembly bill 2902 introduced 2-15-24 currently in Assembly Appropriation committee 5/1/24.