



Our mission is to reduce waste today through innovative resource management and to reach a waste-free tomorrow by demonstrating that waste is preventable, not inevitable.

Sept 9, 2019

To the Mayor and City Council of Ann Arbor,

Eureka Recycling is a non-profit social enterprise with a Zero Waste mission based in Minnesota's Twin Cities. With the two largest contracts in the state and over 100 employees, we collect and process up to 400 tons per day (about 100,000 tons per year) of mostly residential single stream recycling.

We're writing today in support of Recycle Ann Arbor, (RAA). RAA is one of the original mission-driven, community-based nonprofit recycling and zero waste organizations that literally started recycling in the U.S. They are a trusted local and national authority on recycling, waste reduction and zero waste. With only four of these unique programs remaining (Berkeley, CA; Boulder, CO; and Saint Paul, MN) these are among the best recycling programs in the country recognized for the quality of services, education and other programming.

As a mission-based nonprofit recycler we know that RAA, like Eureka, invests their proceeds back into the community, further advancing the City's stated zero waste goals. And, like Eureka they have developed all their programs in close partnership with city leadership. This partnership has resulted in recycling and zero waste services that do not exist in most communities in the United States – including a comprehensive Drop-Off Station, the Reuse Center, the Recovery Yard for construction materials, and more. These services have been recognized nationally and Eureka Recycling has called on RAA's expertise and experience many times over the years. Increasingly, brands and the recyclers that buy materials from recycling programs are looking to organizations like RAA that are mission based and focused on recycling to inform the advancement of the industry towards zero waste as there is increasing pressure from citizens to address waste issues linked to climate change, the environment and human health.

Eureka holds recycling collection contracts in the Cities of Saint Paul, Roseville, Shoreview and Lauderdale, which are separate from contracts the cities or residents have with waste haulers for trash collection. All four cities have high participation, low contamination and cost effective programs and after many years of analysis and studies of their programs' effectiveness there has never been any evidence of benefit in consolidating recycling and garbage services.

Recycling is in trouble and organizations like RAA are needed now more than ever. China's National Sword drastically restricted and then banned the import of recyclables and revealed many of the long-standing underlying problems that are in large part due to flawed economics within the dominant recycling system monopolized by a waste industry that is driven to maximize profits at the cost of quality. This is Ann Arbor's opportunity to challenge that monopoly and stand by their long-term partner. RAA has held the mantle of recycling in Ann Arbor for over 40 years – through many ups and downs including this most recent one – never landfilling material as an easy economic out when the going got tough. Wouldn't this be the worst time to lose this dedication and expertise, just when we need to ensure the stability and success of recycling programs in the US?

Please feel free to contact with any questions.

Sincerely,

Lynn Hoffman & Kate Davenport
Co-Presidents of Eureka Recycling