

**From:** [Charles Whitfield](#)  
**To:** [Hur, Alice \(ENV\)](#)  
**Cc:** [Sarah Ranney](#); [Liana Warren](#)  
**Subject:** Sierra Club Letter of Support for Environment Dept. Refuse Rate Proposal  
**Date:** Friday, April 25, 2025 8:01:52 AM  
**Attachments:** [Sierra Club Refuse Rate 04272025 Env Commission.pdf](#)

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Dear Alice,

Please submit the attached letter of support on behalf of Sierra Club SF Group and residences in San Francisco. We'd like to request the letter be placed into record in reference to agenda *Item 9: Review and Vote on Whether to Approve Resolution File 2025-05-COE, Resolution in Support of the Environment Department's Refuse Rate Proposal*. Also, please send copies submitted to the Commissioners in advance of the 4/28 Commission on the Environment meeting.

Thanks,  
Charles Whitfield  
Sierra Club SF Group Executive Committee Chair



# SIERRA CLUB

## SAN FRANCISCO BAY

San Francisco Group of the San Francisco Bay Chapter

April 25, 2025

To: Commission on the Environment

Re: Support for Environment Department's Refuse Rate Proposal

Dear Commissioners on the Environment:

I am writing on behalf of the over 5,500 members of the Sierra Club who are residential ratepayers in San Francisco. We support SF Environment Department's refuse rate proposal to increase its annual funding by \$3 million to implement Zero Waste, Community Outreach, Toxic Reduction, and Circularity (i.e., repair, recovery, reuse) objectives on behalf of the City as codified by law and voter approved mandates including the following:

1. **Proposition F (2022)** expressly states in Section 2(b) that a central purpose of the law is to "help the City continue to pursue its Zero-Waste goals."
2. **Chapter 9 of the City's Environmental Code (2021)**, codified by the Board and signed into law by the Mayor lays out clear direction, "By 2030, a reduction in the generation of solid waste of at least 15% below 2015 levels and a reduction in the amount of solid waste disposed of by incineration or deposit in landfill of at least 50% below 2015 levels."

**The proposal by the SF Environment Department is a reasonable, environmentally-responsible, and cost-effective request of ratepayers. It should be approved in full.** Should the Refuse Rate Board and its Administrators decline any amount below this minimum, the City will be unable to serve as a responsible environmental steward and be in dereliction of its duties to fulfill statutory requirements established by these laws. Particularly as the Trump administration actively obstructs environmental action, it is time for San Francisco to step up, not step back.

**Separately, we call for the refuse rates to provide for trash processing to separate organics from the black bin.** According to SF Environment reports, residents' trash currently contains excessive amounts of organic waste, and the city is not making progress towards its organic waste diversion goals. Tackling organic waste is important: studies show that trash processing in

combination with behavior change programs is the most effective approach to decreasing organics contamination to landfill and, thus, a major source of methane emissions. In fact, reducing methane emissions from landfills is one of Sierra Club's top legislative agenda priorities nationwide, due to methane's high global warming potential. The San Francisco Group and its residential, ratepaying membership expects and will continue to push the City to actively reduce its climate-warming landfill methane emissions.

**Finally, we call on you to advocate for General Funds to support Climate Action Plan implementation, above and beyond ratepayers funding for Zero Waste and Circularity programs and incentives.** In addition to the Refuse Rate process, the Board of Supervisors and the Mayor must increase funding to the SF Environment Department as well as other agencies addressing climate action via the General Fund. Sierra Club is concerned that our Zero Waste, Circularity and Climate Action Plan ambitions will be unfunded mandates – or even just suggestions. This is a recipe for empty promises. We call for both ratepayer and general funds to implement San Francisco's Climate Action Plan, and ask that you work with the Mayor and Board of Supervisors to secure full funding for timely Plan implementation.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Whitfield', with a small horizontal line to the right.

Charles Whitfield  
SF Group Executive Committee Chair