



## Transcript from Alameda County Recycling Board Meeting Presentation

### Introduction: Timothy Burroughs

I'm so excited to be here today to celebrate entities in the county as our 2022 StopWaste Efficiency Award honorees. This year's awards program marks the agency's 20<sup>th</sup> event which used to be in person but, since Covid, we have shifted online.

A Significant change this year: awards not limited to businesses but also include nonprofits, community organizations, schools and partnerships, reflecting the range of organizations StopWaste works with. There has also been a shift in the focus of the awards, in line with StopWaste's new guiding principles that put material resource efficiency into the larger context of a regenerative economy. For this vision of long-term sustainability to take hold we have to put people at the center and create a culture of equity, partnership and inclusiveness. All awardees presented today model the mindset I just outlined, each in their industry. In the view of our agency, they are true role models that deserve recognition.

We'll kick off today's awards presentation with a winner in Fremont, and for that it is my pleasure to ask Fremont Board member Jenny Kassan to tell us about this awardee's accomplishments.

### Award Recipient: Local Ecology & Agriculture Fremont (LEAF): Jenny Kassan

Thank you, Timothy. As a co-founder of the organization that is our first awardee, this organization is close to my heart. This organization is a true champion of community engagement with countless projects and programs, all focused on addressing food insecurity, sustainable living and mindful consumption. Local Ecology and Agriculture Fremont, or LEAF for short, not only runs two large community gardens but also brings people together through classes, workshops, and activities on things like composting and growing healthy food, to beekeeping, plastic waste reduction, and creative reuse.

LEAF has operated its community gardens since 2014 and provides a place where community members can rent planting beds and volunteers work together to grow pesticide free produce for donation. In 2021 alone, they donated over 6,000 pounds of healthy fruit and vegetables to their food bank partners Tri-City Volunteers in Fremont and Centro de Servicios in Union City. A recently launched gleaning program will add surplus backyard fruit to the bounty of donated produce while preventing waste. Their gardens help community members connect, both informally and through regular programming including LEAF's popular monthly "Talkin' Dirt" Q&A meetings with Master Gardeners.

Always thinking through a community lens, LEAF excels at building partnerships. Their community gardens regularly host activities by aligned organizations. Each year, they mentor Eagle Scout and Gold and Silver Award projects focused on structures for the garden, outreach and educational signage and murals. For the City of Fremont's 2022 Earth Day event, LEAF organized and staffed 10 informational tables about their various programs, and brought in seven partner activity tables, including nonprofit eeviee who along with LEAF and Coyote Hills Girl Scout Service Unit collected hard-to-recycle items like undergarments, denim, socks, and crayons for reuse and upcycling.

The engine behind this dynamic organization is LEAF's President Elaine Owyang. You see her here holding a bowl of freshly harvested cherry tomatoes, alongside Vice President, Bruce Cates and a group of garden volunteers. Congratulations Elaine! Please accept the StopWaste Award for Excellence in Community Engagement on behalf of LEAF.