

Refuse Collection and Disposal*

Digest by the Ballot Simplification Committee

Status: Approved Digest
On: Wednesday, March 2, 2022
Members: Packard, Anderson, Merrill, Patterson

Deadline to Request Reconsideration: 5 p.m. Thursday, March 3

The Way It Is Now: The City regulates the collection, transport and disposal of residential refuse in San Francisco.

The Refuse Rate Board (Rate Board) manages the process to set residential rates and regulations for residential refuse collection and disposal. The Rate Board does not set the collection rates for commercial customers. The Rate Board has three members: the General Manager of the Public Utilities Commission, the City Administrator and the City Controller.

When the Rate Board receives an application to change refuse rates or regulations, it first refers the application to the Director of Public Works, who must hold a public hearing on the application and provide a recommendation to the Rate Board. If nobody objects, the recommendation becomes final. If someone objects, the Rate Board holds a public hearing and can modify the recommendation.

The Proposal: Proposition ___ would restructure membership of the Rate Board, and change the process by which rates and regulations are set for residential and commercial customers, and rules governing how future changes are made. The Rate Board members would be the General Manager of the Public Utilities Commission, the City Administrator and a Ratepayer Representative. The City Controller would also assume new duties as Refuse Rate Administrator.

The Ratepayer Representative would be recommended by The Utility Reform Network (TURN) or an organization dedicated to protecting ratepayers recognized by the Board of Supervisors. The Mayor would appoint the Ratepayer Representative subject to confirmation by the Board of Supervisors approval.

The Refuse Rate Administrator would monitor rates and propose changes to the Rate Board. Public hearings on proposed changes would be held before the Commission on the Environment and the Commission on Sanitation and Streets. The Rate Board would then hold a public hearing on the proposed changes and publish its final decision. Any new rates would be in effect for at least two years, but no longer than five years.

Only the voters may change the Rate Board's membership or its authority over setting rates. By more than a simple majority, the Board of Supervisors may change other parts of the ordinance by a two-thirds vote; if those changes are also recommended by the Mayor, Rate Board and Refuse Rate Administrator, including issuing future permits subject to competitive bidding.

A "YES" Vote Means: If you vote "yes," you want to change the membership of the Refuse Rate Board, how refuse rates and regulations are set and the rules governing future changes.

A "NO" Vote Means: If you vote "no," you do not want to make these changes.