

Conference Committee Report

Submitted by Alec Cooley, Leslie Lukacs & Gary Liss

August 24, 2020

- **Status of Conference Registration**

- We are making slow but steady progress processing old and new registrations. Our goal is to have all original registrants either re-confirmed or cancelled by October 1.
- Original March 2020 paid registrants: 128*
 - Rolled over to virtual event: 22
 - 55% of roll overs have donated eligible rebate to NRC (\$1,870* value)
 - Cancellations w/ refunds: 30 (5 recent)
 - Unresolved, haven't responded: 76
 - Total refund/ rebates: \$11,223* (\$3,650 recent)
 - Total rebate value donated to NRC: \$1,871
- Brand new registrations: 32
 - New revenue: \$4,700

**approximate*

- **Program Update**

- Webinar series: The first of the bi-weekly [webinar programs is this Thursday](#), the day before the board call. The focus is on "Diversity, Equity & Inclusion in Waste and Recycling". We have 200 people registered as on 8/24. We encourage board members to watch the program. [View the overall schedule](#).
- One of our volunteers has been reaching out for the last month to re-confirm speakers and moderators. So far it has been challenging with a lot of follow up hand holding required to get folks to engage. She continues to plug away.
- Gary worked out an arrangement with the Policy Committee to include a National Policy Town Hall on the Dec. 3 Congress program. He can share more details on the call.

- **Communications** – We have been working with Mary & Kerrin to implement a robust communications strategy for the conference. We have a call this Wednesday to final this.

- **Sponsors & Partners**

- We've started reaching out to all the original sponsors to confirm their participation with the new virtual dates. No updated stats, but the conversations to date have been receptive to rolling forward. Once we get the original sponsors processed, we'll go back through the list of prospects to recruit new sponsors.
- One of our volunteers, Amanda Waddell, has been reaching out to all our Cooperating Partners to confirm their support continuing to promote the virtual conference. With Kerrin O'Brien's help, we did an initial outreach several weeks ago to recruit SRO's via the ROC listserv. Amanda is now going the next step to contact them individually. We are offering affiliated SRO's one full conference pass, and a second one-day pass for the 12/3 National Recycling Congress. Non-affiliates can receive just a 12/3 single day pass. The comp's are in exchange for agreeing to promote the conference to their members.

- **Platform A/V logistics**
 - All three of us had a chance to see the Remo platform in action last week, as CRRRA used it for their networking and expo hall sessions. They had a number of mostly human-error glitches that were helpful for us (if embarrassing for them) to learn from. Overall we remain excited about Remo's functionality to allow a robust networking experience.
 - We have not confirmed if we'll use Remo for presentations or go with a separate system. Stay tuned.

July 29, 2020 Board call

- **Virtual conference now public:** By the time of Friday's board call, the revised conference details will be live and registration open to new and returning attendees. This includes:
 - [Zwconference.org website](https://zwconference.org) updated with the new schedule, confirmed speakers and other details refreshed on the site.
 - Roll over confirmation form set up for existing March 2020 registrants. An email was sent to all original registrants informing them of the new dates and format, and instructing them to either confirm or cancel their participation.
 - New registrants – NCRA has built a separate form for brand new registrants in their Wild Apricot platform. The conference will be announced to a wider audience in the monthly NRC newsletter, tentatively set for next week. Social media posts and a media release will be timed to go out the same day.
 - All original speakers have been contacted, and we're in the process of confirming their participation for the new dates.
 - Alec will begin contacting existing sponsors the week of August 3 to get commitments for the December conference.

- **Webinar series** - The first of the webinar programs is set for August 27. The programs will follow roughly every two weeks through October.

- **Individual Board member donations** – This was discussed at the beginning of the year, and many board member volunteered to make a donation to support the conference. These did not get followed up on at the time. If you are willing to make donation, please email Alec or Leslie to confirm this, and indicate 1. the amount (suggested: \$100), and preference to pay by check or PayPal.

- **REMO platform demo** – We have a trial subscription to test out the Remo platform that much of the conference will be organized around. Following the board call, we'll hold a brief demo for anyone able to stay on an extra 15 minutes. We'll show off the interactive features that will allow conference attendees and sponsors to network face-to-face in real time.

To join the demo:

1. Log out of the board meeting Zoom session
2. Click link for Remo session: <https://live.remo.co/e/nzwc-planning-zoom-team-call-cop>
 - a. You'll be prompted to register an account. This takes 20 seconds

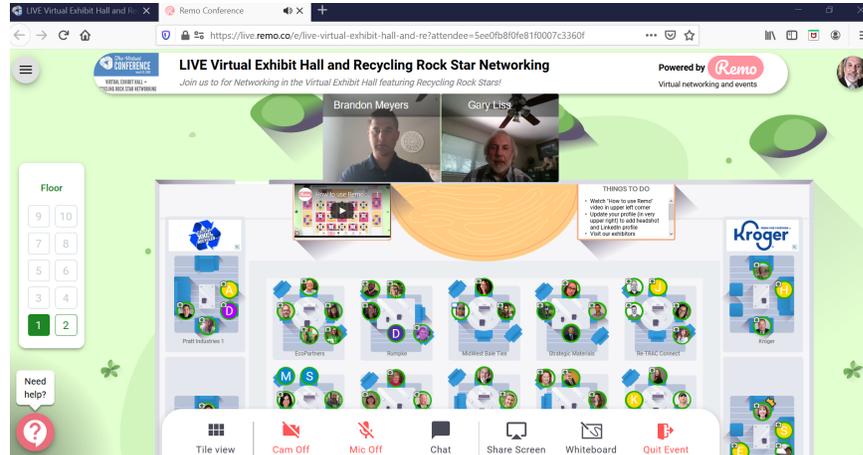
- b. Once you enter, use the dashboard to turn off your microphone.
 - c. On the room map display, look for your avatar placed at one of the tables. Click any other table to move around the room
3. Dial this phone #: **605-475-6700 / Passcode: 842-029#**

June 22

Planning is actively moving forward to the fall 2020 virtual conference.

- **Tentative dates: December 1 – 3.** We've looked at and rejected dates for October (too many conflicting recycling-related conferences) and November (conflicts with the election and ARD events including the EPA's America Recycles Summit). Pending feedback from the board and other stakeholders, we're prepared to lock in these December dates.
- Gary has drafted a **tentative 3-day program** (separate attachment) that:
 - Maintains the original 32 hours of programming (pending confirmation from original presenters)
 - Includes two half day programs with keynote presentations
 - 3rd day specifically framed as the "National Recycling Congress" with:
 - Additional market development content not included in the original zero waste conference
 - Members meeting
 - 2+ hours of virtual networking and expo hall time each day.
 - Monthly webinar series extending from July through November with programming originally from the conference break -out sessions
- We're strongly leaning toward using a combination of **two online platforms, Remo and Zoom** to host the event. Zoom would be used for the actual video conferencing interface for all presentations. Remo is a separate platform that is designed to seamlessly interface with Zoom. It specifically allows for a high degree of attendee interaction that will be used for networking and exhibit hall outside of the presentations. Attendees are presented with a virtual floor map and range of "tables" that can be labeled for expo vendors or table topics, or simply left open for informal small group interaction. Attendees can move between tables on their own, and are able to see everyone else who is "in the room". When the user moves to a table, they join a live zoom session with everyone else at the table. Here is a screen shot of the floor map for reference. Planning is actively moving forward for the fall 2020 virtual conference.
- **Tentative dates: December 1 – 3.** We've looked at and rejected dates for October (too many conflicting recycling-related conferences) and November (conflicts with the election and ARD events including the EPA's America Recycles Summit). Pending feedback from the board and other stakeholders, we're prepared to lock in these December dates.
- Gary has drafted a **tentative 3-day program** (separate attachment) that:
 - Maintains the original 32 hours of programming as the National Zero Waste Conference (NZWC), or in the National Recycling Congress and the bonus NRC Webinars series pending confirmation from original presenters.

- The NZWC includes two half day programs inviting all the plenary presenters from the original NZWC,
- 3rd day specifically framed as the “National Recycling Congress” with:
 - Market development, recycling, composting and product policy content.
 - Slot for Members meeting
 - Slot for ROC meeting
- 2+ hours of virtual networking and expo hall time each day.
- Monthly webinar series extending from July through November with the remaining programming originally from NZWC break-out sessions
- **Platform** – We’ve reconvened a “Zoom Team” to figure out how best to structure the NZWC as an All Virtual Conference. A key recommendation from them was to make sure every 5-7 minutes there’s some interaction with the attendees to replicate what happens in a normal conference setting. The Zoom Team and we are strongly leaning toward using a combination of **two online platforms, Remo and Zoom** to host the event. Zoom would be used for the actual video conferencing interface for all presentations. Remo is a separate platform that is designed to seamlessly interface with Zoom. It specifically allows for a high degree of attendee interaction that will be used for networking and exhibit hall outside of the presentations. Attendees are presented with a virtual floor map and range of “tables” that can be labeled for expo vendors or table topics, or simply left open for informal small group interaction. Attendees can move between tables on their own, and are able to see everyone else who is “in the room”. When the user moves to a table, they join a live zoom session with everyone else at the table. Below is a screen shot of the floor map.



Gary and Alec both sat in on portions of the **Indiana Recycling Coalition’s virtual conference** in early June, which used this same platform combination. We were both impressed with the quality of the networking experience given the constraints of a virtual event. IRC appears to have had a very successful virtual conference overall. We’re planning a debrief call with their staff, but informally they appear to have had a robust attendance, good interaction for vendors, etc.

We’re still investigating the costs for the level of platform functionality we want, but it appears the approved budget of \$1,800 for A/V will cover this.

- NCRA’s board has approved a revised version of the **registration & conference support agreement**. The NRC board previously authorized Dave Keeling to finalize and sign the

agreement. Once this is signed, work will begin on migrating the database or original registrants and create the new registration form.

- **Notifications**

- We've advised UC Berkeley and the Shattuck Hotel of this change. There are no liabilities from our cancellation, due to COVID-19.
- **Speakers** – once dates are firmed up and Program approved, we will notify all moderators and speakers about the change and ask them to confirm that they could participate in the time slots assigned. If they are not able to participate, most slots will remain open to provide more time for interaction. We will ask moderators to work with their speakers ASAP to determine if another format would work better for their sessions given the move to All Virtual (e.g. apply the approach of the Moderated Discussion Groups providing only one 5 minute intro talk, then the rest of the session would be a dialog among the Moderator and the Panel, Audience and the Panel, and among panelists).
- **Attendees** - We're drafting notifications to existing registrants to go out by mid-July which will offer them the following options:
 - Continue to rollover their registration to the All Virtual Conference
 - Refund 50% of whatever they paid and rollover their registration to the All Virtual Conference
 - Refund all their money, less a 20% administrative fee and NOT rollover their registration to the All Virtual Conference

- **Upcoming actions:**

- **Outreach to sponsors.** The sponsor tiers and benefits are being retooled for the virtual event. We'll begin reaching out to re-confirm existing sponsors in the coming weeks.
- Develop new **communication plan** with the Communication Committee. Goal to announce the Save the Date by mid-July.

May 26, 2020

The Conference Committee has spent the last month further investigating options to adapt the National Zero Waste conference to the current Covid-19 situation. High level, our opinion is that an in-person event within the next year is no longer a viable option. NRC should instead pursue an all virtual event THIS FALL to potentially coincide with other rescheduled Zero Waste Week events in October.

Based on the attachments and report that follows, we are asking the board to **take actions on the following proposed motions** on the 5/29 call:

- Motion 1: The NRC Board agrees to proceed with the NRC National Zero Waste Conference as an All Virtual event. The NRC Conference Chairs are authorized to determine how to structure the

All Virtual event and the timing for its implementation.

- Motion 2: The NRC Board approves the attached Conference Budget for the All Virtual event.
- Motion 3: The NRC Board authorizes the NRC President to negotiate and execute an agreement with the Northern CA Recycling Association (NCRA) not to exceed \$10,000 to provide registration and administrative support services in support of the NRC National Zero Waste Conference. NCRA will receive all payments from registrants and sponsors and provide NRC with regular payments for funds received. NRC President will pay all expenses approved by Conference Co-Chairs.
- Motion 4: The NRC Board authorizes the NRC President to negotiate and execute one or more agreements for other administrative and technical support services not to exceed \$10,000 for conducting the NRC National Zero Waste Conference as an All Virtual event.

In addition to these actions, we're seeking informal input on the ideal format for the all virtual event (see review below), recognizing the Conference committee will have to make the final decision on how to structure the event due to timing.

General Updates

- Requested cancellations /refunds to date for the March 2020 event:
 - Registrants:
 - # of cancellations: 24 (out of 233 paid registrants)
 - Total \$ refunded (or in process): \$7,280
 - Sponsors:
 - Refunds requested: 6 sponsors (\$6,000)
 - Re-committed to March 2021 in-person event: 14 (\$20,500)
 - Have not indicated either way: 9 (\$13,500)
- The UC Berkeley ASUC facility let us know they are still confirming guidelines for future events. They made clear, however, that in addition to basic social distancing requirements they are likely to cap overall attendance in one room to 25 to 50 attendees for this Fall.
- Advisory calls: We've held two separate advisory calls to get in-put: 1) Standing conference advisory committee, 2) Ad hoc group of SRO leaders on NRC board. The general take-away from both calls is a general agreement that an in-person event will be very difficult to stage before a vaccine is widely available, and that NRC should pursue an all virtual conference. The discussions have also helped to provide ideas for how to format a virtual event. We have several upcoming advisory calls the week of 6/1 with the same standing group and with another "Zoom" group specific to further discuss how best to structure a virtual event.
- NCRA (Northern CA Recycling Association) has submitted a proposal to manage event planning logistics, registration process, including receiving registration and sponsor payments and additional processing of March 2020 attendee refunds). We have included a preliminary

proposal from NCRA explaining their proposed costs for all the tasks. This will be the basis for a revised Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that needs some further negotiations, but we'd like the board to authorize Dave to act on this as soon as the details are finalized as we'll need registration to start by 7-6-20.

- We had a separate call with Dave and Susan last week to review the attached budget documents and generally discuss the conference budget within the context of NRC's current finances.
- **Important Note About Timeline:** With our proposal for an all-virtual event this October, we will need to hit the ground running ASAP. A proposed timeline is included further down.

Updated Goals for NRC National Zero Waste Conference

1. **Cover 2020 Costs** -NRC incurred the following costs for organizing the 2020 Conference (*confirm these numbers with Susan Collins ASAP*):
 - a. Registration Contractor – Oren Wool - \$5500
 - b. NRC Contractors (Sarah DeSouza and Jill Barry) - \$15,000
 - c. Eventbrite Fees - \$3000
2. **Cover costs to organize Suspended Conference** (see Comparison of Budget Costs; range of \$61,710 to \$102,170, including 2020 costs)
3. **Provide content** that registrants and sponsors want
4. **Demonstrate Innovative Tools** for organizing conferences and workshops for NRC and state and regional recycling organizations to use over the next 1-2 years during COVID-19 pandemic.

Note: NRC has already accomplished one of its original goals for this Conference – to prove that NRC could organize an event of this magnitude, in support of plans to restart offering the National Recycling Congress. The original conference reached its attendance target and far exceeded fundraising goals.

Factors Considered in Scheduling Options

- All options will require registration modification & large-scale refunds to a majority of current registrants
- All registrants will be asked to continue to just rollover their registrations, as in recent emails sent to them. NRC will provide 2 refund options: 1) full refund less 20% administrative fee; 2) partial refund for all but Option 1 (In-Person) at 50% of whatever they paid and they would be also re-registered for the new Conference design
- 2/3 of 324 registrants are from California, ¾ from West Coast; expect that most “rollover” attendees will be solely from California, within a 1-2 hour drive from UC Berkeley

Scheduling & Format Options

Note: Original 2020 conference program was 2 days, 32 hours of programming, split between general sessions and concurrent break-out sessions.

- **Option #1: In-person – Full 2-day conference at UC Berkeley March 17-18, 2021**
 - *No break-out sessions as rooms are too small for physical distancing*
 - *Maximum ballroom capacity = approx. 115 people (originally = 318)*
 - *Presentations live-streamed*
 - *Earliest could take place is March 2021*
 - *Part of Northern CA Recycling Association Zero Waste Week and after NCRA Recycling Update (March 16, 2021)*

Pros

- Networking opportunity attracts attendees
- Potentially greater value to attract /retain sponsors.
- Ability to attract new virtual attendees nation-wide

Cons

- Would require NRC to raise \$55,500 in additional sponsorships, above \$25,000 projected to be retained from 2020 sponsors
- Prohibitive cost per attendee ratio (\$544) for facility rental would eat up profit, risk losing money
- People may still be reticent to attend in-person or to fly or take train or BART to event.
- Lower attendance & social distancing could minimize networking potential regardless
- Risk that pandemic flare up could shut down Conference entirely after investing another year of planning, sponsorship solicitation and outreach efforts

- **Option #2 A: Hybrid - In-person + Virtual**

- *First day - in-person, full day*
- *Second day – virtual program (Zoom or similar w/ interactive capabilities)*
- *Potential to schedule in October 2020*
- *New registrations would likely need to be restricted to virtual attendance only*

Pros

- Retain some existing registrants otherwise lost if entirely virtual
- Ability to attract new virtual attendees nation-wide
- Allow for virtual break out session and other virtual-only content
- Easier to retain greater % of original attendee's & sponsor's fees.

Cons

- Would require NRC to raise \$33,500 in additional sponsorships, above \$25,000 projected to be retained from 2020 sponsors
- Additional planning logistics and costs for both live and virtual programming.
- High facility cost / per attendee ratio (\$326/person)

- **Option #2 B: Hybrid - In-person + Virtual**

- *Similar to above, but...*
- *Limit in-person program to 4 hours, repeated in the afternoon for different group of attendees*
- *Remainder of content done virtually in subsequent days.*

Pros

- Same as above, plus...
- Double the # of attendees who can attend in-person
- Potentially saves money by avoiding need for lunch costs

Cons

- 4 hour in-person may not be enough to motivate travel / commute to live event.
- Still would need to provide some food and beverages
- Risk that pandemic flare up could shut down in-person elements of Conference entirely after investing another year of planning, sponsorship solicitation and outreach efforts

• **Option #3 A: All virtual – Two full days**

- *Program over two full, consecutive days*
 - *Day 1: plenary & general sessions*
 - *Day 2: best of break-out sessions (8 of 24 hours previously scheduled)*

Pros

- Eliminate risks and costs of in-person conference

Cons

- Low tolerance for all-day computer-based content
- Would be difficult to schedule for east and west coast time zones
- Glut of free webinars could make it hard to attract & retain attendees
- Force partial refund to all existing registrants. Increase # people canceling outright
- Challenge to provide commensurate value for sponsors and exhibitors expecting in-person interaction.

• **Option #3 B: All virtual – Spread over entire week**

- *Four-hour programs, each day over entire week (4-5 days)*
- *Could offer Bonus of 2-3 Zero Waste Webinars before the Conference to build interest, and 4-5 Zero Waste Webinars after the Conference (and include time to recognize sponsors in the webinars)*

Pros

- Keeps perception of an “event”
- Eliminate risks and costs of in-person conference

Cons

- May still be too much concentrated time commitment over entire week.
- Force partial refund to all existing registrants. Increase # people canceling outright
- Challenge to provide commensurate value for sponsors and exhibitors expecting in-person interaction.

• **Option #3 C: All virtual – Spread over two weeks**

- *Six-hour programs, over four days, two days each week*
- *Scheduled to be accessible on East or west coast time*

Pros

- Would allow more downtime & networking between sessions.

- Eliminate risks and costs of in-person conference

Cons

- Force partial refund to all existing registrants. Increase # people canceling outright
- Challenge to provide commensurate value for sponsors and exhibitors expecting in-person interaction.

- **Option #3 D: All virtual – Spread content over 12 week period**

- *Kickoff 4 hour “plenary” program flowed by series of weekly 2-hour webinars*

Pros

- Lower impact on attendee schedules
- Eliminate risks and costs of in-person conference

Cons

- Shifts perception from an “event” to a webinar series, therefore harder to justify cost against competition of free programs.
- Glut of free webinars could make it hard to attract & retain attendees
- Force partial refund to all existing registrants. Increase # people canceling outright
- Challenge to provide commensurate value for sponsors and exhibitors expecting in-person interaction.

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- **Option #3 E: All virtual – Spread content over month for Zero Waste month**

- *Four-hour programs for 2 days each week over entire month of October 2020 (Zero Waste Month in Brazil)*

Pros

- Lower impact on attendee schedules
- Keeps perception of an “event”
- Eliminate risks and costs of in-person conference

Cons

- Force partial refund to all existing registrants. Increase # people canceling outright
- Challenge to provide commensurate value for sponsors and exhibitors expecting in-person interaction.

Preliminary Timeline for a Fall 2020 Event

- October 2020 date TBD - first day of event, following NCRA’s Recycling Update (note: could be anytime that week, if we still wanted to do hybrid at UC Berkeley)
- July – Open registration
 - Need 100% program schedule finalized & at least 50% speakers confirmed
 - Process refunds to original attendees as they request them
- Early June
 - Publicize Save-the-date and changed format

- Prompt existing attendees to commit to new event or cancel
 - Begin to confirm speakers for new arrangement
 - Set up registration system
 - Negotiate, execute and start NCRA contract
- May 29 - NRC Board call. Action items:
 - Adopt budget
 - Approve event format
 - NCRA contract - authorize President to negotiate and execute contract

NCRA Agreement Tasks

- Draft Registration System and Test
- Import 2020 Rollover Registrants
- Launch 2021 Registration Links
- Open Registration
- Send Notice to 2020 registrants including new 2021 Registration Rates
- Respond to general Conference inquiries and resolve issues with registration process
- Notice to 2020 registrants about final 2020 Refund Deadline
- Early Bird Registration
- Regular Registration
- Late Registration
- Manage registration at event

Other Virtual Conference Support

- Subscription to virtual platform
- Technical advisor on virtual platform design and operations
- Administrative support for day of event(s) to manage back of house operations while volunteer MC and Moderator(s) guide session

NRC National Zero Waste Conference Leadership Roles

1. Overall Conference Management – Alec and Leslie Co-Chair. Alec will do Monthly Reports to Board. Leslie will convene Conference Advisory Committee calls (Agendas, Notices, Reminders, Notes)
2. Registration – Gary lead on revised MOU with NCRA by 6-1-20.
3. Program – Gary lead on coordination with speakers and moderators. Gary explore if NCRA lead on virtual tours (or could be part of Program responsibilities)
4. Virtual Platform – Alec lead on evaluating platforms (e.g. Zoom, hopin, others)
5. NCRA Recycling Update and other Zero Waste Week events –Leslie liaison to NCRA.
6. Communications - Alec lead in working with Communications Committee on NRC e-newsletters, News Releases, direct emails to members and registrants, cooperating organizations, partners, media relations, posting on NRC website and social media

7. Venues - Alec lead with ASUC and Lin King to cancel facility. Leslie lead with caterer, Sudbusters and Hotel Shattuck Plaza to cancel. Gary lead to cancel A/V contractor, Todd Sutton and Urban Ore (may request virtual tour of Urban Ore).
8. Financial Management
 - a. Gary revise Conference Budget. Board approves.
 - b. Alec contact Sponsors to reconfirm for All Virtual Conference, solicit new sponsors, and follow-up with sponsors for logos, registrations and other input.
 - c. NRC Bookkeeper Jill Barry track and report all expenditures to NRC Board monthly (with Susan oversight)
 - d. Jill and Dave Issue checks for expenditures budgeted (with Susan oversight).
 - e. NCRA receive all checks (e.g. registrations and sponsorships) and send a check to NRC monthly, less NCRA expenses for that month.
 - f. Susan oversee financial management systems and Dave Keeling oversee all transactions and priorities. NRC should not approve Sarah DeSouza conducting NRC business during her workday where she has a full-time job. Susan should establish separate line items for expenditures and revenues of the NRC National Zero Waste Conference (like the Murray Fox Trust Fund), and track revenues, expenditures and time in support of that Conference separate from other NRC financial reports, duties and responsibilities.

Zero Waste Conference Planning Report - 4/20/20

Resolving 2020 logistics

- Sponsors and registrants were emailed the last week of March and first week of April, letting them know of the new dates and refund policy. So far:
 - Attendees - 13 have requested refunds
 - Sponsors
 - 11 have agreed to roll sponsorship to the 2021 event (\$14,500)
 - 8 have requested refunds (\$7,500)
 - 8 hadn't paid original invoice (\$9,000)
 - 10 have not responded w/ intentions (\$18,000)
 - We've received a few but not overwhelming number of complaints about the 20% fee
 - No refunds issued yet - Still working out process
- Hotel Shattuck – Leslie was finally able to speak with someone at the hotel, and confirmed we have no liability for the canceled rooms do to the force majeure clause.

2021 Planning

- Contingencies for March 2021: It's becoming increasingly clear the world will not return to "normal" before next March. For the moment we are still working on a simple reboot of the same format event. Without a vaccine in place, its likely many people will not want to attend a face-to-face event and / or that authorities will require social distancing that could reduce by 2/3rds the number of people allowed in the room. For the moment, we are exploring three alternatives:

1. Basic reboot of conference – continuing working out logistics on the hope this can come together. No contracts / commitments being made at this time
 2. Hybrid in-person / live stream event – Allow for fewer socially-distanced in-person attendees + more remote attendees. Possibly shift break out content entirely to online platform.
 3. Entirely online program.
- ASUC ballroom – We have a hold on the March 17 & 18, 2021 dates, however, no contract has been signed.
 1. Still exploring whether to keep original half-ballroom capacity or expand to full room
 2. Contract would still be coordinated through Lin King / Cal Zero Waste’s office.
 - Unclear at this time if he will be able underwrite rental fee as part of in-kind sponsorship.

March 19 report

Gary, Leslie and I have been working over the past week to research our options for rescheduling the Zero Waste conference. High level, our realistic option is to postpone the 2020 conference until March 2021.

Rescheduling

We’d hoped to present the board an option for a fall 2020 reschedule. Though even this fall is risky, our hope resetting for this fall was to diminish pressure for refunds. The same UC Berkeley facility originally offered us late September dates. Subsequently we learned yesterday they’d been instructed, for the time being not to schedule or sign contracts for anything before January 2021. Lin King was looking at other campus locations, but we can assume the same policy will apply to any Cal facility. We’ve not pursued other facilities for several reasons we can share on the call. For reference, NCRA is still looking to reschedule their event for this fall, as well as hold another event next March.

The same UC Berkeley facility has confirmed availability for March 17 & 18, 2021. Gary, Leslie and I are **recommending the board vote to approve rescheduling for these dates**. An added bonus is that these dates would allow us to use the entire ballroom, doubling the capacity we had reserved for this year’s new-canceled dates (we had essentially sold out the available 315 capacity). This also aligns with NCRA’s planned 2021 dates, which would allow us to again coordinate with other Zero Waste Week events.

Related to this, the Shattuck Hotel has confirmed we can get the same room block for March 2021. If we agree to reschedule this block, they have agreed to waive the \$5,000+ penalty we otherwise faced for canceling this week.

Refund Policy

Assuming the Board agrees to the 2021 dates, there will be an expectation of offering refunds to both attendees and sponsors. I am attaching a separate doc with details including an analysis of our costs and options for refund policies that recoup some or all of our costs, as well as incentives to roll over registration / sponsor funds for next year’s event. We are asking the board to consider these options and be prepared to vote on a policy on tomorrow’s call.

Conference Organizing

Gary and Leslie deserve a tremendous thank you for the countless hours they've put into planning this event. Going forward, Gary let us know he can continue to coordinate the program, but needs to step back from his role as a co-organizer. I have volunteered to take his place, working with Leslie moving forward.

Best,

Alec