



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACTS:

Sanitation Districts:

Rupam Soni: 562.908.4288, ext. 2303

Grades of Green:

Melissa Bailey: 310.465.5647

SANITATION DISTRICTS OF LA COUNTY TO HELP SCHOOLS DIVERT TRASH FROM LANDFILLS

Agency teams up with non-profit group Grades of Green to reduce trash produced by schools

Whittier, CA (August 17, 2011)—Skip the ziplock, recycle your milk carton, and please compost that banana peel. That's the lesson the Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County wants to teach area school children this year. The agency announced today that it will partner with Grades of Green, a Manhattan Beach-based non-profit group, to conduct its first "Trash Free Lunch Challenge." The contest will divert thousands of bags of trash from area landfills and save schools thousands of dollars in supplies and trash hauler fees.

"The goal of the program is to not only reduce trash at schools, but to educate kids, hoping they'll develop positive recycling habits for a lifetime," said Steve Maguin, the Sanitation Districts' Chief Engineer and General Manager. "So Grades of Green is helping us fulfill our mission—to protect public health and the environment through innovative and cost effective solid waste management—both now and for the future."

"Grades of Green developed this fun, hands-on Trash Free Lunch initiative to teach students how to protect the environment while saving both parents and schools money," said Lisa Coppedge, Grades of Green co-director. "We're thrilled that the Sanitation Districts are helping us reach more schools with this educational and empowering program."

Participating schools will ask students to bring lunches that eliminate trash by using reusable lunch containers, reusable water bottles and cloth napkins. All students, including those who buy lunch, will sort waste into recycling and composting.

Any school within the Sanitation Districts' service area is eligible to participate. The first qualified 10 schools to register will receive an Eco Starter Kit worth more than \$1,500 from Grades of Green. All schools must register at www.gradesofgreen.org/trashchallenge by October 15, 2011 and complete implementation of the Trash Free Lunch program by March 1, 2012.

-more-

A panel of environmental experts and other judges will evaluate the implementation and success of the two finalists' programs. The winning school will receive a Chevron Grand Prize of a \$1,000 education grant.

The Sanitation Districts are a regional agency consisting of 23 independent special districts serving over 5.7 million people in 78 cities and unincorporated territory within Los Angeles County. The Sanitation Districts protect public health and the environment through innovative and cost-effective wastewater and solid waste management, and in doing so convert waste into resources such as reclaimed water, energy, and recycled materials.

Grades of Green is a national non-profit organization that provides parents and educators with free instructions for making schools greener on its website, www.gradesofgreen.org. Anyone wanting to implement sustainability programs can register their schools online—at no cost—to get tips on reducing trash, emissions, and harmful classroom chemicals, plus dozens of other ways to help the environment.

Grades of Green has been honored with many awards, including the U.S. EPA's prestigious Environmental Award. Grades of Green is growing rapidly, with nearly 45,000 students in 13 states enrolled. Its goal is to enroll thousands of schools with millions of kids—all caring for the environment and collectively making a huge impact. For more information on Grades of Green visit www.gradesofgreen.org or contact Melissa Bailey at 310-465-5647. For more information on the Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County, contact Rupam Soni at 562-908-4288, ext. 2303.

###