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RE RECYCLING LEVY AS PER THE 2021/22 BUDGET AND TARIFFS

1. In its request for the approval of proposed waste management service tariff for 2021/22 MTEF, the City of Johannesburg (COJ) plans to add an additional R50 “recycling levy” on top of the monthly refuse removal bill if a resident’s property is worth more than R350 000.
2. Section 4 (8) explains the following:
*“Recycling entails separating waste at the source of generation/households (Separation at source (S@S)) and Pikitup team collect recyclables at different time schedules. The City’s waste management bylaws made it mandatory for every households within the City of Johannesburg jurisdiction to separate waste at their households and businesses. Pikitup will be rolling out full programme for the collection of recyclables from households.
Affluent households at various suburbs excluding those located in areas classified as township and informal settlements will be charged additional levy at an amount of R50 per month for all properties with a market value above R350 000.”*
3. As we understand it, in terms of section 22 of the City’s Waste Management By-laws (2013), “the Council may prescribe by a notice published in the Provincial Gazette that, from a prescribed date, areas, specific generators or holders of particular categories of waste must for the purpose of recycling, separate those categories of waste and must, store, dispose of or treat the separated waste in the manner prescribed in the notice”.
4. Therefore, in line with this section of the waste management by-law, the City is implementing mandatory separation at source of dry recyclables and garden waste in affected areas of the city from the 1st July 2018.
5. We also understand that this means that from the effective date it will be compulsory for residents in the affected areas who are currently receiving the recycling bag to place dry recyclables (paper, plastics, metal and glass) for kerbside collection by Pikitup or its service

providers for further processing. The type of bag that residents receive for this purpose is a “clear colour” or a “blue colour” bag depending on the service provider that is delivering the service on behalf of Pikitup.

6. While we believe this is an important development for a more sustainable future, residents shouldn't be charged to do the work of separation and more explanation is needed what the R50 is for. Surely it cannot cost R50 for one blue plastic bag and one black one per week.
7. Recycling at source is no doubt a step in the right direction for all municipalities and metros, however charging residents instead of incentivising them is not. In addition, The CoJ needs to adopt a new strategy of managing its waste, in order to introduce international best practice to capitalise on the business and revenue generation opportunities that come from waste.
8. Accordingly, OUTA believes the CoJ should not be introducing an additional “Recycling Levy” on its already overstretched residents. Instead, the CoJ should be reducing the R397 “Waste Management Service” charge by a reasonable amount (for example R50 off) for those residents who participate in the ‘recycling separation at source’ initiatives introduced by the CoJ.
9. Furthermore, OUTA is also of the opinion that many informal recyclers, who have exercised entrepreneurial initiatives and successfully collected recyclable waste for many years, should be consulted and permanently employed or included into any plans emanating from the City’s “Recycling Strategy”. It is extremely important to ensure that health and safety standards are also met to protect reclaimers from harm and to formalise their roles in Waste Management.
10. We believe that central to this approach should be the fact that revenue generated by the recycling programme should aim at covering the cost of operations and subsidise participating residents by reducing their municipal “Waste Management Service” charges.
11. We hereby oppose the proposed increase, however, we are willing to engage with the City to determine a better way forward as we do believe in the concept of recycling and OUTA is of the view that there may be a mutual benefit between residents and the City, should a different approach be taken to this initiative.

Kind regards,

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