

COUNTY OF SONOMA
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Sonoma County Landfill: Issues and Opportunities

Any decision regarding the Landfill must address critical financial, environmental, health and safety issues confronting the Sonoma County, as well as the communities contained within it.

The community's goals that have driven the years-long process include:

- Ensure the facility is operated in environmentally safe manner
- Ensure the facility is operated to reduce greenhouse gases and in a manner consistent with climate protection initiatives
- Support AB 939 waste diversion goals and the Countywide Integrated Waste Management Plan
- Reduce or eliminate environmental, operational and closure/post-closure liabilities
- Provide for on-going, sustainable disposal of solid municipal waste stream
- Achieve predictable on-going disposal rates consistent with Bay Area averages
- Maximize monetary return on assets
- Reduce or eliminate future liabilities related to its eventual closing.

An efficient, environmentally safe, and financially stable in-county waste disposal site is preferable to continued "out-hauling" of County waste and is required for sustainable waste management.

Privatization Is The Only Viable Option For Maintaining An In-County Landfill

Divestiture provides the only option available to re-establish in-county landfill capacity which is the environmentally superior option for taking care of the community's solid waste. Resumption of disposal operations at the landfill will cost more than \$70 million for liner construction, which the County does not have. Nor does the County have the ability to finance the liner construction since the County does not have flow control from the cities. The cities have told the County that they are unwilling to give flow control to the County. Privatization would bring the necessary financial resources to the community for resuming disposal operations at the Central Landfill.

An in-county landfill supports the diversion goals of AB 939 and the Countywide Integrated Waste Management Plan.

An in-county landfill will reduce greenhouse gases as compared to out-hauling our community's solid waste by truck or rail.

The County fully supports the solid waste hierarchy of "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle," however, landfills are still necessary for the disposal of residual materials which remain after recycling.

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Public Process Related to the Issues and Opportunities

In 2003, in response to community concerns, the Board of Supervisors and county staff began an exhaustive review of the issues associated with the landfill. In January, 2006 the results of a two-year assessment of long-term waste alternatives was presented to the community for review and comment. In April 2006, the Board was presented with the study as well as a summary of the comments received from stakeholders and the public, their resultant direction to staff was to focus on the options of long term waste out-haul or divestiture of solid waste assets.

It is important to know that the Board of Supervisors has not made any decision on the proposed divestiture. Staff is simply negotiating the terms and conditions of the proposed divestiture which will be brought to the Board at a public workshop later this spring. The decision makers and the public will have ample time to review and comment on the proposed terms and conditions of a divestiture before the Board takes any action on a contract.

If you are interested in being on the mailing list for future Board meetings relating to the proposed divestiture, please contact Susan Klassen, Deputy Director of Sonoma County Transportation and Public Works @ sklassen@sonoma-county.org or (707)527-2231.