

SIMI VALLEY LANDFILL EXPANSION TASK FORCE

Comments to the Simi Valley Landfill Expansion D.E.I.R.

December 9, 2009

The Simi Valley Landfill Expansion Task Force concludes that there is no evidence in the public record supporting a Statement of Overriding Consideration for the Simi Valley Landfill and Recycling Center expansion request. The project Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) identifies significant environmental impacts resulting from the proposed project which cannot be mitigated. Moreover, the DEIR is unable to make a compelling reason or matter of urgency supporting an expansion at this time. It is the Task Force's opinion that, to satisfy the applicant's expansion request, the Ventura County Board of Supervisors must adopt a Statement of Overriding Consideration with unsubstantiated findings as no fair argument can be made that the merits of approving the project outweigh the environmental damage resulting from the project expansion.

As proposed, the project will be the second highest man-made structure in Ventura County, attaining a height of 1,270 feet above sea level; the colossal slopes and artificial ridgeline formed by the mammoth collection of 123 million cubic yards of waste will permanently scar Simi Valley's beloved view shed into perpetuity; the landfill will destroy the Alamos Canyon tributary creek and eliminate the storage capacity of the EPA-designated 100-year flood plain (see Appendix F (HEC-RAS) containing a total of 270 Errors warning Notes); construction will result in the reduction in population and direct long-term loss and degradation of habitat of two locally important bird species; the economic gain of an insignificant number of jobs created by the project will be significantly outweighed by the loss of potential job creation, business development and retention in adjacent properties; the project's expanded coverage from 185 to 371 acres will destroy locally important farmland; and the project will increase the region's cumulative carbon footprint in a time where California leads national efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

An approval of a project with regional significance will send a signal that the county is willing to sidestep aggressive efforts to control waste generation within its boundaries and will take the "easy out" solution for the continued and unsustainable practice of dumping waste in and on our precious lands. However, by firmly and resoundingly rejecting the unsubstantiated claim that the expansion is needed now, future generations will hold the County Board of Supervisors and the Simi Valley City Council in high regard for protecting their ability to enjoy a safe and prosperous life.

In the best interest of the residents of Ventura County, the Task Force encourages the Board of Supervisors and the Simi Valley City Council to take this opportunity to proactively partner with jurisdictions and members within its boundary to strengthen waste diversion rates, improve recycling programs, expand waste educational programs and to lobby for aggressive waste reduction legislation and support 21st century engineering technologies to convert waste to energy and inert useable materials.

1. Supporting Reasons

In addition to the above statements, the Task Force finds the following deficiencies of the DEIR:

Reason #1: The public record for the project does not provide information detailing how the county's waste disposal options have been exhausted and that the landfill expansion is of vital need for public safety and to address a dire waste storage situation. In fact, the DEIR is erroneously silent to the Countywide Siting Element's findings, adopted by the ten Cities, with regard to projections of future waste generation, remaining disposal capacity, and disposal alternatives. Conservative landfill capacity estimates, prepared as recently as 2009, conclude that twenty-one years of capacity, at a minimum, are currently available in Ventura County without the subject landfill expansion.

Reason #2: Odorous emissions from the proposed expanded landfill have not been adequately evaluated. No receptors have been established nor has an acceptable dispersion model been prepared. In concluding that odors will be minimal, or sufficiently masked by perimeter perfumed chemical dispersants, the DEIR refers to the lack of historic public complaints of odors. In fact, hundreds of odor complaints have been made according to residents of surrounding residential communities and commercial businesses, although the specific County of Ventura department or official may not have been contacted. Most residents of Simi Valley maintain the belief that the subject landfill is, in fact, a part of the City of Simi Valley.

Reason #3: The DEIR fails to adequately evaluate negative environmental impacts of the landfill expansion over an oil and gas field. Although public comments were previously provided to the authors, the document has failed to incorporate a methane or hydrogen sulfide site evaluation. Additionally, the DEIR has failed to address well known industrial accidents associated with the mixing and horizontal/vertical migration of landfill gas, gas storage reservoir gases and biogenic gases generated from landfill operations as may be magnified and not readily mitigated due to landfill gas impermeable liners. State requirements for 1,000 ft. boundaries extending beyond the landfill may be substantially unable to provide an adequate environmentally safe buffer that may, in fact, be on the order of one mile or larger.

Reason #4: The "no project" alternative cannot be refuted and proves that no expansion is justified at this time or in the near future.

Reason #5: There is strong supporting evidence that the State of California is committed to its Zero Waste Policy and towards that end actions, programs and legislation will continue to be introduced to achieve this goal.

Reason #6: The DEIR fails to adequately address either off-site alternatives of local governments to promote and procure next-generation nondisposal facilities that effectively divert post-recycled residual wastes to beneficial use, or on-site waste

conversion technology facilities at the landfill. The document addresses only limited technologies that are relatively obsolete in the United States or not cost effective. Other state-of-the-art technologies are either misconstrued in terms of effectiveness or in terms of costs.

Reason #7: The DEIR fails to evaluate a watershed boundary for the landfill. While the document notes Federal restrictions on government mandated regulations, it fails to address the alternative of negotiated boundaries.

Reason #8: The DEIR is rife with statements concluding that the actual project impacts cannot be fully disclosed at this time and will require further studies, reports, plans and actions to be prepared.

Reason #9: The DEIR identified secondary for-profit business that will result from the proposed expansion including, but not limited to, production and off-site transport of LNG and CO₂ as dry ice. Both of these businesses are known to result in significant environmental risk, including explosivity and ammonium or other toxic compounds, yet neither process has received environmental risk review in the D.E.I.R.

Reason #10: The DEIR has failed to adequately address Community concerns to the expansion application. Off-the-cuff responses in the DEIR, as example “comment noted”, “see Section 2” and “responsibility of another Agency” are incomplete and do not provide required response.

Reason #11: The proposed landfill expansion may be out of compliance with the Ventura County Siting Plan which identifies areas in the County suitable for landfill operations based on criteria established by the plan and ratified by all Cities within the County. The DEIR fails to address requirements imposed by, and maps incorporated therein, the Plan, including, but not limited to, residential and certain health sensitive business receptors.

Additional specific comments to the DEIR are summarized following on the attached Exhibit made a part of this submittal.

Submitted this 9th day of December 2009 by the Simi Valley Landfill Expansion Task Force.

Barbra Williamson, Chair
Simi Valley Landfill Expansion Task Force

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