

COUNTY OF SONOMA  
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
AND PUBLIC WORKS  
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SANTA ROSA, CALIFORNIA 95403

Susan Klassen, Interim Director



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February 21, 2013

File: 50-01-17.3

Ms. Diana Henriouille-Henry, PE  
Senior Water Resource Control Engineer  
California Regional Water Quality Control Board  
North Coast Region  
5550 Skylane Boulevard, Suite A  
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

Re: **Response to Non-Technical Public Comments on Draft Waste Discharge Requirements, Order No. R1-2013-0003; Central Disposal Site**

Dear Ms. Henriouille-Henry:

The County is providing the following Response to Public Comments received from William J. Henrich (WJH) and the Happy Acres Mutual Benefit Water System (HAMBWS).

***WJH: Traffic impacts associated with the landfill (Phases 3, 4 and 5) buildout, disposal operations whereby all the County's refuse will be transferred to this facility plus the potential of haul trucks from Roblar Road quarry equals how many vehicles per hour during the peak traffic hour (7:00-8:00 AM)? I think Happy Acres neighbors could relates more to quantity of the heavy trucks heading down Mecham Road instead of a nonspecific traffic survey as referenced in an Final Memorandum.***

**County Response:** The Traffic Study that was included as part of the Addendum to the Sonoma County Central Disposal Site improvement Program Final Environmental Impact Report for the Reopening of the Central Disposal Site (May 25, 2012) ("CEQA Addendum (May 25, 2012)") determined that when 100% landfilling begins, the am peak traffic hour would be 8-9 am, and would result in approximately 85 in bound vehicles to the Central Disposal Site. This represents approximately 10% of the daily total number of vehicles to the site.

The CEQA Addendum includes a discussion of potential cumulative traffic impacts associated with the proposed Roblar Road Quarry Project (Quarry) and found that the Quarry would generate approximately 28 truck trips during the am peak hour. These trips would be distributed over various haul routes in the vicinity, which would vary on any given day dependent upon the destination of the trucks.

***HAMBWS: The only mention of the leachate pipeline connecting the facility to the City of Santa Rosa's Laguna Wastewater Treatment Facility is in paragraph E.5 Landfill Description and History and paragraph G14. What current and future monitoring exists to protect against potential contamination of adjacent ground water wells in the Happy Acres community wells or the HAMBWS well located off Stony Point and Meacham roads? Why this is issue not addressed in the WDR or the Monitoring plan?***

**County Response:** The leachate pipeline is not addressed in the draft permit as it falls outside of the purview of the Regional Board. Although all other aspects of leachate management are well within the jurisdiction of the Regional Board, the leachate that flows past the property line (site boundary) within the leachate pipeline, is regulated under the following separate permit issued by the State Water Resources Control Board: Order No. WQ 2008-0002-EXEC, Adopting Amended Monitoring and Reporting Requirements for Statewide General Waste Discharge Requirements for Sanitary Sewer Systems. A Notice of Intent to Comply with the Terms of the Statewide General Waste Discharge Requirements for Sanitary Sewer Systems was submitted September 22, 2010. The associated State Identification Number is WDID# 1SSO11652.

As it is extremely important to the County that the leachate pipeline convey leachate to the treatment plant reliably, and without resulting in a discharge to the environment, a monitoring plan was developed prior to placing the pipeline in operation. Since the pipeline is a High Density Polyethylene (HDPE) double-wall pipeline, any leak in the inner, carrier pipe, would result in leachate accumulating in the annular space between the inner and outer pipe. Confidence has increased with time as no leaks have been detected.

Multiple low points exist in the pipeline as it travels along Hammel, Mecham and Stony Point Roads. Specialized monitoring points were installed during construction of the pipeline that provide a means of checking for any fluid accumulating at the low points. If fluid is detected at a low point, it can be differentiated to conclude whether it is leachate leaking from the inner carrier pipe.

Confidence was expected to build with time assuming no leaks were detected. The monitoring plan specified that the monitoring frequency would decrease over time as confidence was established. Monitoring frequency began as a daily program for the first two weeks, then was weekly for the subsequent two months, then monthly for a year and then quarterly. No leaks have been detected to date and the quarterly monitoring will continue.

***HAMBWS: What is being done to prevent odors from the settling and storm drain ponds? Can they be covered? Can they be relocated on the property to prevent spills occurring and affecting neighboring properties? Can they be relocated to prevent their odor being blown into our communities? Can they be treated to prevent wind blown bio hazards, toxins, and odors from escaping the landfill area? These issues are not addressed anywhere in these documents but it seems that if the County needs to pump these fluids through a double contained pipeline, then the ponds may be a hazard to people and wildlife as well.***

**County Response:** The County is not the operator of the compost facility, rather a Solid Waste Facility Permit is held by the Sonoma County Waste Management Agency. A compliance plan to address compost stormwater discharge related activities is required under the proposed order and is to be submitted to the NCRWQCB by May 15, 2013.

***HAMBWS: What criteria was used to determine that a full EIR for all phases of this project combined was not required for expansion and long term operations at the landfill? Was public review and comment allowed in this decision process? If not, why not? Considering the extent of the new expansion areas and impact to***

***existing systems (i.e. leachate, gas collection, composting etc.) and to the surrounding public it appears that a full EIR would be essential to insure safe overall operations and environmental protection of both air and water.***

**County Response:** The Sonoma County Central Disposal Site Improvement Program Final Environmental Impact Report (1998) addressed the impacts of all phases of the proposed project. The proposed project does not include any “new expansion areas” that were not already identified and analyzed under the 1998 EIR. The EIR process for the proposed project included extensive public comment and review.

The CEQA Addendum (May 25, 2012) supplements the 1998 EIR, and incorporates by reference the 1998 Rock Extraction EIR (REA EIR). The 1998 EIR described an improvement program to provide solid waste disposal capacity at the Central Disposal Site on Meacham Road southwest of the city of Cotati. Also in 1998, the County certified the REA EIR for the excavation of rock in order to create an additional eight months of landfill capacity. The rock has been excavated but no waste disposal has yet occurred in this area, however, it is now included as part of the proposed project.

CEQA embodies a strong presumption that once an EIR has been prepared for a project, no subsequent environmental review is required unless conditions or circumstances present themselves which would trigger the need for such additional environmental review. Public Resources Code section 21166 and Section 15162 of the CEQA Guidelines define the conditions that would require further environmental review, in the form of a Subsequent EIR or a Negative Declaration, for a project. These conditions are listed below:

15162            Subsequent EIR's and Negative Declarations

- (a) When an EIR has been certified or negative declaration adopted for a project, no subsequent EIR shall be prepared for that project unless the lead agency determines, on the basis of substantial evidence in the light of the whole record, one or more of the following:
  - (1) Substantial changes are proposed in the project which will require major revisions of the previous EIR or negative declaration due to the involvement of new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects;
  - (2) Substantial changes occur with respect to the circumstances under which the project is undertaken which will require major revisions of the previous EIR or negative declaration due to the involvement of new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects; or
  - (3) New information of substantial importance, which was not known and could not have been known with the exercise of reasonable diligence at the time the previous EIR was certified as complete or the negative declaration was adopted, shows any of the following:
    - (A) The project will have one or more significant effects not discussed in the previous EIR or negative declaration;

- (B) Significant effects previously examined will be substantially more severe than shown in the previous EIR;
- (C) Mitigation measures or alternatives previously found not to be feasible would in fact be feasible and would substantially reduce one or more significant effects of the project, but the project proponents decline to adopt the mitigation measure or alternative; or
- (D) Mitigation measures or alternatives which are considerably different from those analyzed in the previous EIR would substantially reduce one or more significant effects on the environment, but the project proponents decline to adopt the mitigation measure or alternative.

If none of the conditions described above has occurred, but some changes or additions to the previous environmental analysis are necessary, then the lead agency shall prepare an addendum to the previously certified EIR. (State CEQA Guidelines, § 15164)

The CEQA Addendum (May 25, 2012) considers those changes in the project or project circumstances, or new information since preparation of the 1998 and REA EIR's that might trigger preparation of a subsequent EIR or Negative Declaration for the proposed reopening of the Central Disposal Site. The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors considered the CEQA Addendum at their publically noticed meeting on June 12, 2012 and adopted Resolution No. 12-0309 whereby the Board of Supervisors specifically found that "The [CEQA Addendum (May 25, 2012)] discloses and the Board finds that the proposed project will not result in a new significant environmental effect or a substantial increase in the severity of a previously identified significant effect due to substantial changes proposed in the project, substantial changes with respect to the proposed project circumstances, or new information of substantial importance that was not known and could not have been known with the exercise of reasonable diligence at the time the Board certified the Final EIR."

***HAMBWS: How did Keller Canyon Landfill Company, Allied Waste Systems Inc. and Republic Services Inc. qualify for this contract? What were the performance criteria? Was full financial disclosure required? Has the past performance of Keller Canyon Landfill Company, Allied Waste Systems inc. and Republic Services Inc. been evaluated?***

**County Response:** It was recommended by the City/County Solid Waste Advisory Group (SWAG) (that the Board of Supervisors approve and direct County Staff to work with the existing contractors at the Central Landfill and Transfer Stations to develop a proposed regional model that included public ownership with private operations that could meet SWAG's adopted goals for diversion, cost efficiency and local control. Republic Services had their qualifications vetted when they secured their existing County contract through the public competitive process. In addition, Republic was extensively vetted during the previous County divestiture process. The vetting process in both instances included financial, performance, and experience based criteria.

County staff is available, and as always, ready to work and engage with RWQCB staff to address any questions or concerns regarding this submittal. If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact me at (707) 565-7940.

Very truly yours,

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC WORKS



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Susan R. Klassen  
Interim Director

c: Trish Pisenti, Alex Sebastian, Glenn Morelli  
Lochlin Caffey, Rick Downey, Republic Services  
David Leland, Terri Cia, RWQCB