

## Countywide Waste Disposal

### REASON FOR INVESTIGATION

The Bailard landfill in the City of Oxnard accepts most of the residual waste generated in the western portion of the county and is scheduled for shutdown and closure in 1996. As late as mid 1995 there were no contingency plans to dispose of west county waste after closure of the landfill. This fact and the realization that the Countywide waste disposal issue has been an environmental and political headache spanning more than a decade of planning indecision and inaction gave rise to the perception that there was and is a waste disposal crisis in the county.

### PROCEDURES FOLLOWED

- The Grand Jury interviewed Ventura County Supervisors, members of the Ventura County Waste Commission, Solid Waste Management Department, West Ventura County Waste Management Authority, East County Solid Waste Task Force, Ventura Regional Sanitation District, Resource Management Agency, Air Pollution Control District, Ventura County Agriculture Commission, elected and appointed county and city officials as well as concerned private citizens. In addition the Grand Jury attended many meetings of these entities.
- Tours included the Bailard, Toland and the Simi landfills, the Del Norte Material Recovery and Transfer station under construction in the City of Oxnard and the proposed Weldon Canyon Landfill site.
- Annual reports, studies, memos, directives and other correspondence and informational materials were studied including the Toland Landfill Environmental Impact Report.

### FINDINGS

- The Ventura Regional Sanitation District, which operates the Bailard and Toland landfills, issued then later certified an Environmental Impact Report to expand the Toland Landfill in order to accept disposable west county waste that is currently taken to the Bailard landfill.
- The Ventura Regional Sanitation District applied for a Conditional Use Permit for the expansion of the Toland landfill. The Board of Supervisors authorized the issuance of a Conditional Use Permit despite an earlier denial by the planning commission and despite significant opposition by environmentally concerned private citizens.
- The Del Norte Material Recovery and Transfer station, or MRF, is under construction in the City of Oxnard. The City owns the facility and it will be managed and operated by BLT Enterprises, a private-public corporation. The permit allows for 2,780 tons per day disposal capacity but will begin operation with a much lesser amount, perhaps 800 tons per day. Waste handling operations will be conducted largely underground resulting in minimum environmental impact on the surrounding area. The facility will include a learning center and an observation platform. In addition, rotating exhibits and an outreach program are planned with corporate sponsorship and participation.
- The Gold Coast material recovery facility located in the City of Ventura is undergoing

expansion modification. It is doubtful that the expansion will be completed by the time the Bailard landfill closes. The owner/operator is seeking a permit to increase the facility capacity from the present 400 tons per day to 1200 tons per day of solid waste.

- The Ventura County Waste Commission was disbanded and its duties, functions and responsibilities were transferred to the Ventura Council of Governments, VCOG. In the Council of Governments each city is represented by its mayor and the county is represented by two members of the Board of Supervisors.
- The cities and the county have organized into two groups, east and west, for waste disposal planning. The east county, represented by the East County Solid Waste Task Force, is 'site driven' while the west county, represented by the West Ventura County Waste Management Authority, is 'market driven'. These two entities are Joint Power Agreements, JPA's, as established by the county Local Area Formation Commission, LAFCO.
- The site driven and the market driven philosophies have been adopted by the east and west county local communities working collectively through their respective Joint Power Agreements. This type of regional planning accomplished at the local level is hailed as a desirable 'bottom up' planning as opposed to a centralized or 'top down' approach, by some factions in the county. However, the existence of two Joint Power Agreements and the Ventura Regional Sanitation District as a third party each with it's own and distinct planning agenda is regarded as fragmented and parochial by some governmental officials.
- The County Administrative Officer and the Simi Valley City Manager have spearheaded and developed a plan for east county cities and east county unincorporated area waste disposal referred as the Simi Landfill Agreement. The plan will be submitted to the Ventura Council of Governments for consideration and adoption by the member cities.
- The West Ventura County Waste Management Authority issued a Request for Proposal to identify waste disposal options available to the west county. Eight responses were received and evaluated by an independent consulting firm. The scope of the guidelines established as evaluation criteria by the Joint Powers Agreement was limited. The criteria did not include waste disposal cost analysis nor did it include the possibility that the Toland landfill would be expanded. Nevertheless, it was recommended that the west county cities and the west county unincorporated area negotiate individually with the two Material Recovery Facilities for the best option based on cost. The existence of two Material Recovery Facilities, Gold Coast and Del Norte, are of significant value to the County because they foster and encourage competition of this kind.

## COMMENDATIONS

The Grand Jury commends the County Administrative Officer and the Simi Valley City Manager for initiating and aggressively spearheading the development of a Simi Landfill agreement that will be acceptable to the VCOG member cities.

The Grand Jury commends the County Supervisors for instigating the transfer of the Ventura County Waste Commission functions to the Ventura Council of Governments.

The Grand Jury commends the City of Oxnard for accepting the west county waste for so many years.

The Grand Jury commends the City of Oxnard for the construction of the Del Norte Materials Transfer Station and for encouraging the development of a new greenwaste recycling center.

The Grand Jury commends the Solid Waste Management Department for its excellent track record in introducing innovative countywide programs designed to maximize recyclable waste.

The Grand Jury commends the city waste managers who have worked so diligently in order to achieve the state of California mandated 25 percent waste recyclable volume in 1995 and their continuing efforts to meet a 50 percent reduction by the year 2000.

## RECOMMENDATION

The 1995-1996 Grand Jury recommends:

1. The County Planning Department and the Environmental Health Division exercise diligent monitoring of the Ventura Regional Sanitation District operations at the expanded Toland Landfill site to assure compliance with the conditions and agreements established in the Conditional Use Permit.
2. The Ventura Council of Governments, as the agency responsible for solid waste management, promote long term and cost effective waste disposal services for residents and businesses in the cities and unincorporated county areas.

NO RESPONSE REQUIRED