



JOHN A. FANTHAM  
DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS

# County of Santa Cruz<sup>0425</sup>

---

## DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

701 OCEAN STREET, ROOM 410, SANTA CRUZ, CA 950604070  
(631) 4643160 FAX (831) 464-2385 TDD (831) 464.2123

AGENDA: October 5, 1999

September 23, 1999

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
701 Ocean Street  
Santa Cruz, California 95060

SUBJECT: BUENA VISTA LANDFILL SOIL MANAGEMENT PROJECT

Members of the Board:

On May 18, 1999, your Board considered a final set of permit conditions for the Buena Vista Landfill Soil Management Project on what is commonly referred to as the **Rocha** property, located adjacent to the active landfill and soil excavation area. At that time, your Board elected not to take action on the subject permit and directed staff to instead pursue an alternative project on the future City of Watsonville Landfill expansion site. On June 22, 1999, your Board directed Public Works to return with a report on the results of preliminary engineering and negotiations with the City of Watsonville regarding the alternative Buena Vista Landfill Soil Management Project.

Several key issues arose during initial staff discussions with the City of Watsonville regarding the use of their landfill expansion site for the Buena Vista Landfill Soil Storage Project. The most significant of these issues are engineering of the conveyor system and coordinating the soil site operations with the City of Watsonville's landfill expansion schedule. These have proven to be more time consuming tasks than originally conceived and have delayed completion of the final engineering study and negotiations with the City of Watsonville.

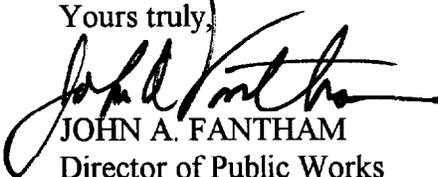
The distance and significant grade changes that exist between the soil excavation area and the Watsonville site have proven to be a major challenge, both in defining the most cost effective routing and operational structure, and in engineering of the soil conveyor equipment. The proposed conveyor route was just recently defined and we are currently soliciting technical feedback from conveyor manufacturers on equipment applications. Initial conveyor equipment cost estimates are projected to be in the range of \$1.5 to \$1.8 million.

Coordinating removal of our stored soil with the City of Watsonville's future landfill expansion schedule has also been a difficult task. It appears, based on Watsonville's landfill life projections, that the City's landfill development plans will have to be changed from the current two construction phases to three or four construction phases to accommodate our soil storage project. This change in construction phasing will likely result in cost increases to the City of Watsonville and will have to be considered in our negotiations.

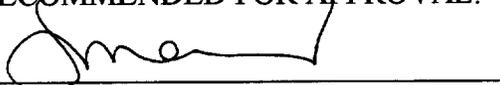
A potentially lower cost alternative would be for Watsonville to take all their municipal refuse to the Buena Vista Landfill for several years, likely near the end of the project life, until all the stored soil is removed from their site, allowing them to complete their landfill expansion. This alternative would result in an estimated one to two year reduction in the life of the Buena Vista Landfill and require that the City of Watsonville provide the County with a comparable amount of disposal capacity in their landfill expansion after it is constructed. However, this alternative is complicated by the uncertainty of landfill life projections for both our landfills. As your Board is aware, regulatory changes, technological advances, economic conditions and natural disasters can also play a key role in annual refuse generation rates and landfill capacity projections. These unknown future conditions can add a significant margin of error to these projections. Both the City of Watsonville and our County are also planning new and expanded Waste Diversion Programs in the coming year which will have yet to be defined impacts on future landfill life projections. In short, the final agreements between our two jurisdictions will have to be much more flexible than originally thought to account for unknown future circumstances.

We anticipate having the engineering study completed by mid-October 1999, at which time we can commence final negotiations with the City of Watsonville and begin drafting operational agreements. Once these agreements are in place, we can begin environmental review and the required permitting processes with the applicable resource agencies and the California Coastal Commission.

It is therefore recommended that the Board of Supervisors accept and file this report on the Buena Vista Landfill Soil Management Project and direct Public Works to return on or before December 14, 1999, with a report on the results of preliminary engineering and the status of negotiations with the City of Watsonville regarding use of their property for the project,

Yours truly,  
  
JOHN A. FANTHAM  
Director of Public Works

RPM:rw  
RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL:

  
County Administrative Officer

- copy to:
- California Coastal Commission
  - David Koch, City of Watsonville
  - Ana Demorest, CH2M Hill
  - Dana McRae, County Counsel
  - Kim Tschantz, Planning Department
  - Art Higaki
  - Fred Magaard, Public Works