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County of Santa Cruz

HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY

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ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

April 3, 2000

Agenda: April 11, 2000

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

County of Santa Cruz

701 Ocean Street

Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Subject: Septage Disposal Fees at the Santa Cruz Wastewater Treatment Plant

Members of the Board:

On December 7, 1999, your Board adopted changes to the Unified Fee Schedule which included the fees for discharge of septage at the City of Santa Cruz Wastewater Treatment Plant. It now appears that the fees were inadvertently set at a level that was too high, beginning January 1, 2000. Staff is requesting Board authorization to charge the septic tank pumpers at a lower rate from January 1 through June 30, 2000, at which time new fees are expected to go into effect.

The County has a contract with the City of Santa Cruz to take septage from County pumpers. Under the terms of that contract, the City charges the County for disposal, and the County charges the pumpers, based on a monthly statement of the volume of septage each pumper discharges. The amount of the charge to the County is established by the City of Santa Cruz to cover the annual cost of operation and maintenance for septage collection and treatment. The capital costs of the facility are paid by the County separately using fees collected from septic system property owners through County Service Area 12 (CSA 12). The charges are tied to a facility financing plan that has been reviewed by the State to ensure that all users of the treatment plant pay their fair share.

The charges from the City for July 1, 1999, to June 30, 2000, were set at \$0.0425/gallon by the City. The County rate is usually the same as the City charge, however an error resulted in them being set at \$0.0420/gallon, when the Board adopted the Unified Fee schedule in June, 1999. The County fee was changed in December, 1999 (effective January 1, 2000) to \$0.0427/gallon to make up for the undercharge. However, due to the concerns expressed by the septic tank pumpers, Environmental Health is requesting the Board of Supervisors to allow the charges to be reduced to the \$0.0425/gallon level, retroactive to January 1, 2000. A credit will be given for any payment of charges in excess of \$0.0425/gallon which occurred after January 1, 2000.

It is anticipated that the charges from the City will increase again, effective July 1, 2000. The proposed increase in charges will be included in the Unified Fee Schedule which will be considered by your Board during budget hearing in June. Environmental Health staff will provide advance notice to the septic tank pumpers, and intends to hold a meeting with the pumpers in the spring to discuss the fees and any other issues they have.

County Counsel's staff have indicated that is acceptable to charge a fee less than that specified in the Unified Fee Schedule without going through the process of modifying the Fee Schedule.

It is therefore RECOMMENDED that your Board authorize Environmental Health to charge \$0.0425/gallon for disposal of septage at the City of Santa Cruz Wastewater Treatment Plant effective January 1, 2000 through June 30, 2000.

Sincerely,



Rama Khalsa, Ph.D
Health Services Agency Administrator



Diane L. Evans, R.E.H.S.
Director of Environmental Health

RECOMMENDED



Susan A. Mauriello
County Administrative Officer

cc: CAO
Environmental Health
HSA Administration
City of Santa Cruz