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DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

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AGENDA: JUNE 6, 2000

May 24, 2000

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 April 4, 2000, your Board directed Public Works to return on June 6, 2000, with a status report on the Buena Vista Landfill Soil Management Project and a **draft** agreement with the City of Watsonville for use of their landfill expansion site for our soil storage project. The City of Watsonville and Public Works have been cooperatively working on this project since late last year. Engineering has now been completed on the conveyor system, soil storage area, bridges and crossings. As discussed in our last report, the delineation of wetlands required by the Coastal Commission and the California Department of Fish and Game staff has also been completed. A final project structure was cooperatively developed to accommodate both the County and the City of Watsonville's landfill development schedules and soil management needs with no disruption of services.

Unfortunately, just prior to printing the engineering report at the end of April 2000, City of Watsonville staff informed us that they wished to make significant changes to their landfill development plans and schedules. These last minute changes have significantly impacted both the Buena Vista Landfill's revised site development plans and the proposed phasing of soil movement between the two sites. **After** reevaluation of its annual disposal volumes, Watsonville now believes that construction of their future landfill expansion will need to occur at least five years earlier than they had originally thought. As a result, the County would have to remove approximately 370,000 cubic yards of soil from the Watsonville site in 2012, well in advance of the original schedule. The environmental compliance and operational requirements for the Buena Vista Landfill will not allow for this volume of on-site soil storage. These late changes have also delayed our negotiations on the final operational and lease agreements. The project is further complicated, as there is no longer any flexibility in the soil management schedule to account for increased diversion activities that may extend the life of the Buena Vista Landfill. If we are successful in **further** extending the Buena Vista Landfill's life through increased waste diversion activities, or if Watsonville's landfill fills sooner than anticipated, the amount of soil that must be prematurely removed and relocated **from** the Watsonville site will increase by 60,000 or more cubic yards per year.

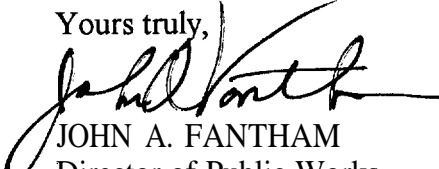
We are reevaluating potential changes to the Buena Vista Landfill's future development plans to determine if any of the 370,000 cubic yards of soil can be accommodated on the landfill. However, it appears that this recent change in Watsonville's development schedule is very problematic for the soil storage project and cannot provide enough flexibility to accommodate our long-term landfilling needs and objectives. The delineation of wetlands also indicates some unavoidable wetlands impacts may occur with this project. The site has a central drainage course, with similar conditions to those on the previously approved **Rocha** project, that may require Coastal Commission and/or Army Corps of Engineers authorization and a mitigation plan. We are transmitting the delineation of wetland's plan to both these agencies for their preliminary review and comment, prior to initiating any project development activities.

In light of the recent changes made by the City of Watsonville, Public Works will need additional time to evaluate whether this project alternative is still viable, and if not, to define the remaining options your Board has with regard to future landfill development and soil management activities. We will continue to work closely with Watsonville staff to determine if other joint landfill development structures can be used to accommodate this project in an environmentally and cost-effective manner.

It is therefore recommended that the Board of Supervisors take the following action:

1. Accept and **file** this report on the Buena Vista Landfill Soil Management Project.
2. Direct Public Works to return on or before August 8, 2000, with a status report and development recommendations regarding the Buena Vista Landfill Soil Management project.

Yours truly,



JOHN A. FANTHAM
Director of Public Works

RPM:mg

RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL:



County Administrative Officer

copy to: Public Works
Rick Hyman, California Coastal Commission
Brian Hunter, California Department of Fish and Game
David Koch, City of Watsonville
Ana Demorest, CH2M Hill
Dana McRae, County Counsel
Kim Tschantz, Planning Department
Fred Magaard, Public Works
Art Higaki

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