



County of Santa Cruz

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

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THOMAS L. BOLICH
DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS

AGENDA: OCTOBER 17, 2000

October 12, 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 October 3, 2000, your Board considered a report and staff presentation outlining project options for the Buena Vista Landfill Soil Management Project. Upon conclusion of deliberations on this matter, your Board directed Public Works to seek the opinion of local Coastal Commission staff on the most preferable project option. Your Board also directed Public Works to focus discussions with the Coastal Commission on the three project options considered most feasible and cost effective.

1. Watsonville/Imazio Properties: Move soil to the Watsonville Landfill expansion site and adjacent farm property southwest of the Buena Vista Landfill, via a 6,500 foot conveyor belt system.
2. Rocha Property: Move soil to the adjacent farm property west of the Buena Vista Landfill via a 1,200 foot overhead conveyor system, as originally proposed and permitted. All permits and permitting activities are being held in abeyance with the various permitting agencies.
3. Miyashita/Love Properties: Use the Miyashita and Love properties immediately north of the Buena Vista Landfill, as previously recommended by the Buena Vista Community Homeowners Association members.

Public Works was also given additional direction to seek Coastal Commission opinion relative to emission impacts for each project option. Coastal Commission staff indicated that air quality was not addressed in any detail within the Coastal Act and therefore is not a significant concern for the Coastal Commission. Their position is that air quality issues are better addressed by other agencies, such as the local air district, through the environmental review process. For your Board's reference, we are providing a brief discussion of the qualitative differences between the project options relative to air quality impacts.

Quality

Emissions for this project come in two forms, dust from soil movement and equipment travel on dirt roads, and engine emissions from heavy equipment. While timing has not allowed for a formal air quality analysis of these alternatives, we can provide some qualitative opinion of the air quality impacts from these three project options.

The Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District (MBUAPCD) only considers permits for stationary (non-mobile) emission sources. In the case of these three project options, the conveyor systems are the only activities requiring permitting and the only constituent of concern is dust, as the conveyor systems are proposed to be electric powered. The **Miyashita/Love** project is the only project option of the three that would not require MBUAPCD permitting. Overall, the **Watsonville/Imazio** project would be slightly higher in dust emissions than the **Rocha** or **Miyashita/Love** projects, due solely to the longer conveyor system and increased number of soil transfer points along the conveyor that would generate dust.

Engine emissions from heavy earth moving equipment and trucks also have bearing on the comparative environmental impacts of these project options even though they do not require air district permitting. Engine emissions will be somewhat higher on the two conveyor based project options as heavy equipment is necessary at both ends of the conveyor system for excavation and stockpiling activities. Earthmovers known as "scrapers" are used to excavate soil and move it to the conveyor loading area. At the other end of the conveyor system, the soil is deposited on the ground, then pushed and compacted into the stockpile area by one or two bulldozers. The **Miyashita/Love** project option only requires the use of scrapers that will haul the soil directly to the stockpile area. No additional compaction or earthmoving equipment is needed with the **Miyashita/Love** project. As a result, one or two fewer pieces of large heavy equipment will be needed under this option, reducing the overall engine emissions.

Coastal Commission Staff Opinion

On Tuesday, October 10, 2000, Public Works staff met with Dr. Charles Lester, District Manager and Mr. Rick Hyman, Senior Project Manager of the Coastal Commission to discuss the Buena Vista Landfill Soil Management Project options, as directed by your Board. As a preface to our discussions, we reconfirmed the Coastal Commission's general ranking of priorities regarding protection of coastal resources.

1. Biotic Resources
2. Agricultural Resources
3. Scenic Resources

Based upon these priorities and the Coastal Commission staff's general knowledge of these project options, their opinion was the **Miyashita/Love** project appeared to have the least amount of impact to coastal resources. This opinion is based upon data from a site visit conducted by a California Fish and Game biologist and a preliminary biotic survey conducted by the County's environmental review consultant. Both parties categorized the site as having limited habitat value and no apparent presence of plant or animal species of concern. This opinion was tempered with

the need for a formal and thorough biotic review of the site to confirm these preliminary findings and provide a more thorough comparison of biotic resource values for all three project options. Coastal Commission **staff** also indicated that due to the long history of the MiyashitaLove sites being fallow, agricultural value also appears to be less than that of the other sites that are currently in agricultural production. However, they did express some concern over the loss of the greenhouse facilities which also have agricultural use value. Acquisition of buffer space north of the Love property could allow for reconfiguration of the stockpile to avoid removal of the greenhouses.

The **Miyashita/Love** project has one additional advantage if the formal biological survey confirms Coastal Commission **staff's** opinion that no significant or protected habitats exist on-site. If this proves to be the case, the County would likely avoid several timely permitting processes with California Fish and Game, Army Corps of Engineers and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Coastal Commission staff did not have a strong opinion on scenic resource impacts other than to indicate the MiyashitaLove project appears to be more sheltered from roadside view and therefore less of a visual impact than the **Imazio/Watsonville** project which sits on a hilltop within the coastal viewshed.

Cost Impacts

In our October 3, 2000, report to your Board, we also provided you with cost estimates for the three project options.

Rocha: \$6,400,000 - \$7,100,000
MiyashitaLove: \$6,500,000 - \$7,500,000
Watsonville/Imazio: \$8500,000

However, the **Miyashita/Love** project cost estimate was qualified as not including expenses related to impact mitigation on adjacent residents or businesses. During deliberations, your Board inquired about these expenses and impacts to adjacent property. Based on previous correspondence to your Board from American Sporthorse (adjacent property) regarding the use of the MiyashitaLove properties for our soil storage project, in October 1998, they estimated that the cost of relocating their business would range from \$1,235,000 to **\$1,935,000**. While this information has not been confirmed, it does provide a benchmark for your reference. We also provided this information to Coastal Commission staff and they indicated that project cost is not a significant factor in their charge to protect coastal resources.

Summary

The Coastal Commission staff was able to provide us with their qualified opinion, but not a firm guarantee, that the MiyashitaLove project appears to be the most favorable project option. The potential impacts to adjacent residents/businesses and the additional County costs do not rank as high on their list of resource protection priorities. If the County elects to pursue the MiyashitaLove project, their recommendation is to conduct the biological evaluation early in the environmental review process to allow the Coastal Commission staff and other resource agencies to conduct biotic comparisons of all three options and provide firm directions on project development. Coastal Commission staff also recommended that your Board approve holding the active permit for

the Rocha project in abeyance until a final project is completed. If the Miyashita/Love project does not come to fruition or your Board elects not to pursue other project options, the County will still need to retain the right to return the Rocha project option to the Coastal Commission for final deliberation and action.

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

1. Accept and file this report on the Buena Vista Landfill Soil Management Project.
2. Consider the staff report of October 3, 2000, and the information received from the Coastal Commission staff and provide Public Works with direction on the Board of Supervisors' preferred project structure.
3. Direct Public Works to initiate environmental review and take all actions necessary to expedite development of the Board of Supervisors' preferred project.
4. Direct Public Works on behalf of the Board of Supervisors to request the Coastal Zone permit for the Rocha project continue to be held in abeyance by the Coastal Commission until further notice.

Yours truly,



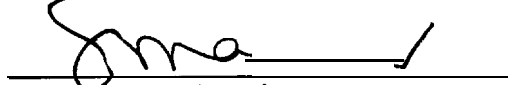
THOMAS L. BOLICH

Director of Public Works

RPM:bbs

Attachment

RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL:



County Administrative Officer

copy to: Rick Hyman, California Coastal Commission
Brian Hunter, CA Department of Fish and Game
David Koch, City of Watsonville Public Works
Ana Demorest, CH2M Hill
Kim Tschantz, Planning Department
Jonathan Wittwer
Art Higaki
Rosemarie Imazio
Alexsandra Howard
David Miyashita
Walter Love
Timothy Silva
Public Works

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