May 1, 2006

The Honorable Cindy Montanez  
State Capitol Room 3013  
Sacramento, CA 94249-0039

Dear Assembly Member Montanez:

ASSEMBLY BILL AB 2296 (AMENDED MARCH 27, 2006)  
CLOSURE AND POSTCLOSURE MAINTENANCE OF SOLID WASTE LANDFILLS

The Los Angeles County Solid Waste Management Committee/Integrated Waste Management Task Force (Task Force) supports Assembly Bill 2296 (AB 2296) which strengthens State law to require owners/operators of solid waste landfills to provide for the facility maintenance in perpetuity or as long as the waste no longer poses a threat to public health and safety or the environment.

Pursuant to Chapter 3.67 of the Los Angeles County Code and the California Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989 (Assembly Bill 939, as amended), the Task Force is responsible for coordinating the development of all major solid waste planning documents prepared for the County of Los Angeles and its 88 cities in Los Angeles County. Consistent with these responsibilities and to ensure a coordinated and cost-effective solid waste management system in Los Angeles County, the Task Force also addresses issues impacting the system on a Countywide basis. The Task Force membership includes representatives of the League of California Cities-Los Angeles County Division, County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors, City of Los Angeles, waste management industry, environmental groups, the public, and a number of other governmental agencies.

California municipal solid waste landfills play a vital role in managing the variety of wastes generated by residents and businesses on a daily basis. They operate under the most stringent environmental standards in the country in order to protect public health and safety and the environment. However, once a landfill closes, it is crucial that a financial assurance mechanism be in place. This financial assurance would protect the community and environment from any unforeseen ill effects of the landfill, and safeguard taxpayers from assuming the financial burden of fulfilling the closure, postclosure, and maintenance activities in the event the landfill owner/operator defaults on his obligations.
Concerns regarding this important issue were recently highlighted in a report prepared by the California Legislative Analyst's Office entitled "Strengthening Public Safety of Waste Facilities and Surface Mines," dated April 2006. The Report found that "even though the owner/operator of solid waste facilities is generally legally responsible for maintaining a site after closure without a time limitation, financial resources to do so may not be available without a financial assurance in place. For this reason, the California Integrated Waste Management Board estimates that the state could face a $1.8 billion exposure for the ongoing maintenance of closed solid waste landfills by mid-century."

AB 2296, if enacted, would address this deficiency in State law to ensure public health and safety and protection of the environment. Therefore, the Task Force supports AB 2296, and applauds your efforts to ensure that solid waste landfills do not pose an environmental health risk to future generations and the environment. If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Mike Mohajer of the Task Force at (909) 592-1147.

Sincerely,

Margaret Clark
Vice-Chair
Los Angeles County Solid Waste Management Committee/
Integrated Waste Management Task Force and
Council Member, City of Rosemead

cc: Governor Schwarzenegger
    Senate President Pro Tem Don Perata
    Assembly Speaker Fabian Nuñez
    Each Member of the Assembly Appropriation Committee
    Each Member of the Los Angeles County Legislative Delegation
    Each Member of the California Integrated Waste Management Board
    Each Member of the County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors
    Each City Mayor in the County of Los Angeles
    California State Association of Counties
    League of California Cities
    League of California Cities, Los Angeles County Division
    Southern California Association of Governments
    Gateway Cities Council of Governments
    San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments
    South Bay Cities Council of Governments
    Solid Waste Association of North America
    Each Member of the Los Angeles County Integrated Waste Management Task Force
    Each City Recycling Coordinator