

FACILITY AND PLAN REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE

Los Angeles County Solid Waste Management Committee/
Integrated Waste Management Task Force

Minutes of February 20, 2003

County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works
900 South Fremont Avenue
Alhambra, California

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Albert Avoian, Business/Commerce Representative
Clarence Gieck, Greater Los Angeles Solid Waste Management Association
John Gulledge, County Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County
Betsey Landis, Environmental Organization Representative
Virginia Maloles, County of Los Angeles Department of Health Services
Michael Miller, Leagues of California Cities-Los Angeles Division
Rafael Prieto, City of Los Angeles

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS NOT PRESENT:

Ledra Sanchez, City of Gardena

OTHERS PRESENT:

Grace Chan, County Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County
Connie Christian, County Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County
Michael Hughes, Hacienda Heights Home Improvement Association
Ajay Malik, County Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County
Mike Mohajer, County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works
Carlos Ruiz, County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 11:33 a.m.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the June 20, 2002 meeting were approved as presented.

III. CONSIDERATION OF FINDING OF CONFORMANCE FOR PUENTE HILLS LANDFILL

Mr. Carlos Ruiz from County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works, distributed copies of and presented the staff report on the proposed continued operation of the Puente Hills Landfill (Puente Hills) to Subcommittee members. Mr. Ruiz stated the County Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County (LACSD) is requesting the Task Force to grant a Finding of Conformance for the operation of Puente Hills through October 31, 2013. Their proposal is to continue operating the facility through October 31, 2003, pursuant to a new Conditional Use Permit (CUP) that was granted by the County Regional Planning Commission on December 18, 2002. The proposal involves a vertical expansion of the existing waste fill area and a small, 12-acre lateral expansion. The proposal includes a daily tonnage limit of 13,200 tons per day, six days per week, with no weekly tonnage limit. The proposal would provide for 38 million tons of total permitted capacity. The proposal also includes the continuation of existing waste diversion and recovery programs and environmental control systems.

Mr. Ruiz stated staff has reviewed the proposal and has concluded the project is in compliance with CEQA. A Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the project was prepared by the LACSD and certified on January 23, 2002, by its Board of Directors. On December 18, 2002, the County Regional Planning Commission, acting as a responsible agency, certified that it independently reviewed and considered the information in the Final EIR prior to approving the CUP. Regarding General Plan consistency and land use, staff finds the proposed project is consistent with the County General Plan.

In regard to permitting, the facility has submitted applications for a Solid Waste Facility Permit and for Waste Discharge Requirements for the continued operations of the landfill. It is expected they will have the permits in place before October 31, 2003. Mr. Ruiz stated the proposal is consistent with the Countywide Siting Element (Siting Element) and the Countywide Integrated Waste Management Plan. Puente Hills is an existing Class 3 landfill and it was previously granted a Finding of Conformance from

the Task Force in December 1993. The Puente Hills Landfill is listed in the Siting Element as an existing facility and a proposed expansion is identified in the Siting Element which is almost the same as the scope of the current project. Prior to development, the Siting Element requires the proponent to demonstrate that the project is in conformance with the Siting Criteria of the Siting Element, which is done through the Task Force. Mr. Ruiz stated the project is consistent with the goals and policies of the Siting Element and subject to full compliance with the requirements of the CUP, the proposal adequately satisfies the Siting Criteria of the Siting Element. Mr. Ruiz stated staff recommends the FOC be granted for the proposal, subject to the conditions specified in the staff report.

Ms. Grace Chan of the County Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County conducted a presentation on the proposed continued operation of Puente Hills. Ms. Chan stated the landfill handles approximately one-third of the disposed waste in Los Angeles County. Ms. Chan explained the LACSD's four main objectives regarding the proposed continued operation of the Puente Hills.

The LACSD's first objective is to utilize the remaining disposal capacity that has been identified at the landfill. Puente Hills has received a CUP to continue operations until October 31, 2013, after which the landfill must close. The permitted tonnage rate for disposal would be a maximum of 13,200 tons per day and the receipt of materials for beneficial use would be limited to existing levels plus an additional amount of dirt needed for future operations.

Ms. Chan stated Puente Hills provides significant recycling programs and the LACSD's second objective is to continue these programs. These programs include the greenwaste recovery program, and energy recovery projects.

The third objective is to continue funding for open space preservation. The funding provided by the landfill operation to date has resulted in the management of over 3,000 acres of native habitat, which is more than four times the acreage that will ever be disturbed by landfilling. When the landfill is ultimately closed, it will be developed for recreational use by the County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation.

Ms. Chan stated the LACSD is committed to implementing waste-by-rail to meet the long-term needs of the County. Therefore, LACSD's fourth objective is to fund a transition to waste-by-rail.

Ms. Chan delineated the requirements specified by the CUP. According to the CUP: \$1 per ton will go to fund community benefits in the area surrounding Puente Hills; \$0.25 per ton will go toward recycling programs in unincorporated areas; the LACSD will be required to fund 12 household hazardous waste and e-waste events per year; up to \$1 million will go to the study of alternative technologies through a subcommittee of the Task Force and possibly fund a pilot facility if an appropriate and viable technology is identified; and the LACSD is required to fund final use of the Landfill after closure. In addition, the CUP also includes a timeline for implementing waste-by-rail. The LACSD must begin development of the remote landfill by the end of 2007, must begin operation of the remote landfill by the end of 2008, and must have an operational waste-by-rail system by the end of 2009.

Mr. Mike Mohajer stated he believes the Puente Hills CUP is the most restrictive permit ever issued. Mr. Michael Hughes of the Hacienda Heights Home Improvement Association stated that three public hearings were held in the community in the evenings and appreciates that residents had the opportunity to express their concerns. Mr. Mohajer stated residents will be able to contact an ombudsman regarding any concerns with Puente Hills that they may have in the future. Mr. Albert Avoian, indicated there were several typographic errors in the CUP text.

A motion was made and passed for the Subcommittee to make a recommendation to the Task Force to approve the Finding of Conformance for the Puente Hills Landfill. Six Subcommittee members voted for recommending the Task Force approve the Finding of Conformance and Mr. John Gullede of the LACSD abstained from voting.

IV. OPEN DISCUSSION/PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Albert Avoian asked what will happen to the 2,000 foot buffer zone that currently exists between residents and the landfill area. Ms. Grace Chan stated the buffer zone will remain as open space that essentially will not be used for anything. The land will be part of the discussion regarding final use for the landfill. The community has requested the buffer zone be legally preserved. Ms. Chan stated the homeowners will participate in the land use decision. The County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation will manage the park facility after landfill closure.

V. MEETING ADJOURNED

The meeting adjourned at 12:22 pm.

Attach.