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September 12, 2023

To: Supervisor Janice Hahn, Chair
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Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell
Supervisor Lindsey P. Horvath
Supervisor Kathryn Barger

From: Fesia A. Davenport FAD
Chief Executive Officer
FAD (Sep 11, 2023 18:23 PDT)

**REPORT BACK ON SUPPORT FOR THE VAL VERDE AND CASTAIC
COMMUNITIES IN RESPONSE TO ODOR ISSUES AT THE CHIQUITA CANYON
LANDFILL (ITEM NO. 88-B, AGENDA OF AUGUST 8, 2023)**

On August 8, 2023, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors (Board) directed the Office of Emergency Management, in coordination with the Directors of Public Health, Public Works, and Regional Planning, and in consultation with the South Coast Air Quality Management District and the California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery, to report back on the following four directives:

1. Identification of the underlying cause of the odors emanating from Chiquita Canyon Landfill in conjunction with State regulatory agencies;
2. Summary of the County's review of the odor mitigation plan provided by the Landfill Operator in conjunction with State regulatory agencies;
3. Resources deployed by the Landfill and the County to address ongoing impacts to the residents surrounding the Landfill; and
4. Independent actions taken by the County to ensure appropriate oversight of the Landfill's mitigation plans to eliminate the generation of odors from the Landfill.

The attached is a 30-day report back to the Board from the Office of Emergency Management.



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Information was compiled from the Departments of Public Health, Public Works, and Regional Planning. Several meetings over the course of four weeks were conducted in order to respond to the motion.

Should you have any questions concerning this matter, please contact me or Kevin McGowan, Director, Office of Emergency Management at (323) 980-2261 or kmcgowan@ceooem.lacounty.gov.

FAD:JMN:ADC:KM
LL:EM:md

Attachment

c: Executive Office, Board of Supervisors
County Counsel
Public Health
Public Works
Regional Planning
California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery
South Coast Air Quality Management District

**SUPPORT FOR THE VAL VERDE AND CASTAIC COMMUNITIES IN RESPONSE
TO ODOR ISSUES AT THE CHIQUITA CANYON LANDFILL**

1. Identification of the underlying cause of the odors emanating from Chiquita Canyon Landfill (Landfill) in conjunction with State regulatory agencies.

The County of Los Angeles (County) is working with Waste Connections, the operator of the Chiquita Canyon Landfill (Landfill), to obtain additional data related to landfill gas collection systems to provide to CalRecycle for their further analysis of the root cause of the odor issue.

Waste Connections reports that the sources of the odors are concentrated in the northwest portion of the Landfill and largely attributed to increases in gas emissions. Waste Connections believes the best approach to mitigate the situation at the Landfill is to increase the current level of gas collection capacity.

Waste Connections further stated the increase in gas production is likely due to a biological reaction taking place within the northwest portion of the Landfill. Although the cause of this chemical reaction is still unknown, one gas being produced at higher-than-normal levels is dimethyl sulfide or (DMS). DMS is produced when plant matter breaks down.

2. Summary of the County's review of the odor mitigation plan provided by the Landfill Operator in conjunction with State regulatory agencies.

Waste Connections' primary solution to mitigate odors is to install new permanent flares to improve the site's landfill gas collection system. The purpose of the gas collection system is to capture and manage landfill gases through a system of wells, pipelines, and flares. The Department of Public Works (DPW) reviewed and approved the flare foundation construction plans submitted by Waste Connections on August 7, 2023, and is awaiting final approvals from the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency before issuing the building permits.

Additionally, DPW's review of the landfill's odor mitigation plan revealed a need to expand air quality monitoring to bring relief to the communities. Waste Connections also needs to demonstrate that the Landfill will have sufficient gas flaring capacity to mitigate the current odor issue and future odor emissions as the production of gas will increase as the waste mass increases and older waste continues to decay.

Since April of 2023, SCAQMD has received hundreds of odor complaints regarding

the Landfill. As a result, SCAQMD has issued multiple Notices of Violation (NOV) to Chiquita Canyon since April of this year. The Department of Public Health (DPH) has also received calls from residents who live near the Landfill complaining of noxious, sometimes chemical-like odors that cause nausea, eye and throat irritation and headaches. Some have reported not being able to sleep or having had to stay away from their homes for extended periods of time due to the strong odors.

On July 26, 2023, DPH sent a letter to Chiquita Canyon requesting certain actions be taken immediately to mitigate the health impacts and remedy the cause of the odor nuisance. Specifically, DPH requested that Chiquita Canyon provide the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) with an evaluation from its expert, SCS Engineers, on the potential sources and cause of the odors. DPH recommended that Chiquita Canyon retain a consultant to work with the TAC to evaluate the long- and short-term health and environmental impacts of this odor incident.

On August 1, 2023, Chiquita Canyon provided the recommendations of its consultant SCS Engineers. In addition, Chiquita Canyon retained a toxicology consultant, CTEH, to evaluate health impacts of this odor incident.

On August 8, 2023, DPH issued comments to Chiquita Canyon regarding its Conditional Use Permit (CUP) – Condition 69 – Air Quality – Report that reiterated the need for Chiquita Canyon to immediately implement the monitoring and mitigation recommendations from its expert SCS Engineers.

On August 15, 2023, Chiquita Canyon responded to DPH, noting that it is in the process of implementing all of DPH's recommendations, including expanding the air monitoring program to include dimethyl sulfide or DMS, enhancing and expanding the list of constituents sampled in their current air monitoring program, conducting frequent and additional volatile organic compound and odor sampling where recent odor complaints have been reported and at landfill on-site locations, conducting a flux chamber study, and reporting all monitoring results to the County. DPH will, with the assistance of the County's retained environmental science expert, closely monitor implementation of these actions going forward. Furthermore, DPH's Solid Waste Program, as the Local Enforcement Agency, has requested technical assistance from CalRecycle to review all available Landfill data and provide a recommended strategy for mitigation of the odor issue.

Waste Connections has already taken the following actions to mitigate the impacts of the odors: expanded the Landfill gas collection system by installing one temporary flare to capture as much landfill gas as possible and plans to install additional temporary flares. Waste Connections also installed deodorizing misters and towers, industrial blowers and fans, and additional extraction wells and pumps to remove leachate liquid from the landfill. In addition to the long- and short-term solutions, Waste Connections implemented a program to provide

residents with free air purifier units upon request. Further, Chiquita Canyon will continue its community engagement, including regularly updating their odor mitigation website, holding community information meetings, and attending the Landfill Community Advisory Committee and Castaic Area Town Council meetings to provide updates and answer questions.

Waste Connections plans to further mitigate odors by installing a geosynthetic cover for approximately 30 acres of the Landfill, including the reaction area, to limit the migration of landfill gas from the odor incident site.

3. Resources deployed by the Landfill and the County to address ongoing impacts to the residents surrounding the Landfill.

The County has remained coordinated when it comes to addressing impacts to residents and will continue to work collaboratively during public meetings such as the Community Advisory Committee (CAC), TAC, and other public forums that require multi-agency coordination.

DPH has set up a help line (626-430-9821) to respond to health complaints from residents living near the Landfill. A Public Health Nurse provides advice to callers on health issues related to landfill odors. The Public Health Nurse collects complaint data, including the types of health symptoms being reported, as well as dates, days of the week, and times of when callers experience these symptoms. A Public Health Environmental Scientist reviews Chiquita Canyon's Quarterly Community Air Monitoring Program Report which contains community air monitoring data for any potential health impacts of hydrogen sulfide and particulate matter. DPH staff also attend the Chiquita TAC and CAC meetings to provide technical assistance and address health related concerns. Additionally, Environmental Health strike team members are conducting weekly odor assessments in the impacted communities.

In an effort to centralize complaints related to the Landfill, a phone number and dedicated email has been set up to serve the community. The public may report their concerns and complaints to ChiquitaComplaints@lacounty.gov or via telephone at (213) 974-6483. Department of Regional Planning (DRP) staff will review the complaint and distribute them to the appropriate County agency accordingly.

4. Independent actions taken by the County to ensure appropriate oversight of the Landfill's mitigation plans to eliminate the generation of odors from the Landfill.

The Interagency Task Force, comprised of the County Office of Emergency Management, DRP, DPH, and DPW, was established to oversee the Landfill's plans and is collaborating with the SCAQMD. In consultation with the Task

Force, DRP issued a NOV to the Landfill on August 18, 2023, for not meeting the requirements of Conditions 12 and 63 of the CUP. The nature of the violations is related to the nuisance odors emanating from the Landfill to the community. The Task Force also requested that Waste Connections expand its Community Air Monitoring Program to include DMS in the monitoring protocol. For more in-depth monitoring, an independent consultant was hired to work with the County's TAC to provide an independent review and examination of the Landfill consultant's health assessment analysis.

In addition, the Landfill's CUP, Condition No. 69 states that upon receiving four NOVs related to air quality within a calendar year, the permittee shall submit information to DPW within 30 days to explain each NOV and steps to address the violations. On July 27, 2023, Waste Connections submitted its Condition 69 Report to DPW. However, additional information was requested by DPW to understand the source of the odors more clearly. On August 18, 2023, Waste Connections provided additional information to DPW including a map, specific landfill data, and mitigation measures, which is currently being reviewed.

On August 15 and 17, 2023, Task Force members attended meetings for the CAC for Chiquita Canyon Landfill and the Castaic Area Town Council to hear directly from affected community members.

In addition to the actions described above, the County has retained an independent consultant to assist the TAC in evaluating Chiquita Canyon's landfill gas assessment and mitigation actions and evaluate and report on the health and environmental impacts of this odor incident.