

# Outside trash is too much, task force says

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SIMI VALLEY - The proposed expansion of the Simi Valley Landfill could result in more trash being trucked in from neighboring Los Angeles and other counties, says a task force formed to study the project.

And that would be at odds with a policy adopted by Ventura County officials in 1993 to preserve the dump for use by local municipalities.

"The future landfill capacity was to be used solely for local use," said Simi Valley City Councilwoman Barbra Williamson, who formed the task force.

"Today we find approximately 35 percent of the daily landfill capacity being allocated to garbage coming from outside of Ventura County, with that number expected to rise to 65 percent," she said.

Waste Management, which owns and operates the landfill, purchased 2,800 acres near the landfill from Unocal Corp., in 2004. At the time, officials said they wanted to double the volume of trash deposited there - from 3,000 to 6,000 tons a day.

In April, the Waste Management formally applied to expand the dump from 185 to 371 acres.

Company officials say that without the expansion, the Simi Valley Landfill - located in the hills north of Madera Road and the 118 Freeway - and the Toland Landfill near Santa Paula will reach capacity in about 20 years.

Waste Management spokeswoman Kit Cole estimated that the Simi Valley Landfill gets 25 percent to 30 percent of its trash from outside Ventura County, including Malibu, Calabasas and Agoura Hills.

She could not say exactly how much trash might be taken in from outside the county in the future.

Jim Dantona, a member of Williamson's task force, said the expansion might be unnecessary if the landfill accepted trash only from Ventura County.

"If you put a ban on out-of-county waste, you would increase the life span of that landfill by at least one-third," said Dantona, who lost a close election in November to Peter Foy for a seat on the Board of Supervisors. "We'll be long dead before that landfill is ever filled up by waste from Ventura County."

Dantona speculated that Waste Management would use the Simi Valley Landfill for trash from Los Angeles County as its other facilities reach capacity.

"The landfills in Los Angeles are coming to a peak," he said. "They are going to take the trash in from wherever they can make the profit," he said.

"They are a business, and we are a community," agreed Alice Sterling, a Simi Valley resident and planner for the city of Pasadena, who also sits on Williamson's panel. "We have to look out for the interests of future generations."

Williamson's seven-member Simi Valley Landfill Citizens Task Force held its first meeting Thursday after members toured the Simi Valley Landfill. About 25 residents of Simi Valley and Santa Susana Knolls attended the meeting, and Williamson said she hoped the group would get more citizen participation at its next meeting set for 7 p.m. July 25 at the Simi Valley Library.

Cole said the situation is complicated because hazardous waste, sewage sludge and recyclable materials generated in Ventura County are shipped to facilities elsewhere.

"Trash, like transportation or energy, is a regional issue," Cole said. "All over the state, trash travels across county boundaries on a regular basis."

As a member of the Ventura County supervisors, Foy will review the landfill-expansion proposal and make decisions on the issue.

Foy spokesman Mark Lunn said the supervisor has not made a decision on the expansion project.

"We want to see what the final proposal is before we make any assessments," Lunn said.

However, during the campaign, Foy said any expansion of the landfill should be solely for Ventura County's needs.

The Simi Valley City Council will also review part of the proposal concerning extending Simi Valley sewer services to the landfill.

Simi Valley officials are also negotiating with Waste Management about setting a police shooting range in the 516-acre buffer zone proposed around the landfill.

Williamson said she formed the task force as an individual rather than under her authority as a member of the Simi Valley City Council. She said she felt that city residents should have every opportunity to voice their opinions.

"In the past, the community has not been involved in this expansion," she said. "The purpose of this task force is to try to make sure the landfill is something that will benefit this community."

Bob Swoish, a former Simi Valley planning commissioner who is also a member of Williamson's task force, said the landfill, which is just outside the city's northwest boundary, is of concern for all citizens in the area.

"I'd like to see some figures to make sure (the landfill) is only for this county, and not for everybody else," he said.

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Information

For more information about

the proposed Simi Valley Landfill expansion, go to [www.keepingventuracountyclean.com](http://www.keepingventuracountyclean.com).