

**PLANNING &
ENVIRONMENT**

(This page is blank)

PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Environmental Management Department

Reason for the Report

The Planning and Environment Committee ("Committee") of the 2000/2001 El Dorado County Grand Jury, in light of various news reports concerning toxic spills elsewhere, elected to inquire into how the County handles spills of hazardous materials, and into the progress being made by the County to conform to the requirements of the California Integrated Waste Management Act.

Scope of Investigation

The Committee:

- Interviewed the Director of the County's Environmental Management Department ("Director") on two occasions; and
- Reviewed various documents provided to it by the Director.

Findings

- F1. The County's Environmental Management Department ("Environmental Management" handles approximately 30 to 50 hazardous materials incidents a year, most of which involve fuel spills from motor vehicle accidents. Small spills are dealt with by County personnel, after contact from the California Department of Transportation ("CalTrans") where the accidents have occurred on Highway 50.
- F2. County personnel have pagers and are available to respond to hazardous waste emergencies on a twenty-four (24) hour per day basis.
- F3. In the event of a large spill, the California Office of Emergency Services ("OES") is contacted and apprised of the nature of the spill. OES then contacts the appropriate agencies to dispatch personnel to assist in the response.
- F4. Environmental Management also acts in coordination with the County Sheriff, pursuant to a Memorandum of Understanding, in connection with the identification and cleanup of hazardous materials from approximately ten (10) to thirty (30) drug labs in the County.
- F5. Reimbursement from the Federal Emergency Management Agency is available for County responses.

- F6. California state law requires counties to have reduced solid waste by 50% by 2000, or face fines of up to \$10,000 per day. Counties that were, in the State's view, making appropriate progress toward achieving this goal were given an extension to 2003 to achieve the 50% reduction.
- F7. El Dorado County received the extension.
- F8. The County, thus far, has reduced solid waste by approximately 40%.
- F9. Solid waste disposal services in El Dorado County are provided primarily by two companies, and secondarily by various other sources. Specifically:
- Waste Management, Inc. ("WMI"), a publicly held corporation whose stock is listed on the New York Stock Exchange, and its subsidiary El Dorado Disposal, serves the City of Placerville and the western portion of the County along the Highway 50 corridor from Pollock Pines to El Dorado Hills.
 - South Tahoe Refuse Company, a privately held company, and its two divisions, Sierra Disposal Services and American River Disposal Service, serve the unincorporated portion of the South Lake Tahoe Basin (including Meyers, Christmas Valley and Hope Valley), the High Mountain Country (including Pacific House, Crystal Basin, Kyburz, Strawberry and Echo Summit), and the northern portion of the County (including Coloma, Pilot Hill, Cool, Georgetown, Garden Valley, Greenwood and Auburn Lake Trails).
 - There are two small service areas within the County. The unincorporated area of the West Lake Tahoe Basin (including Meeks Bay and Tahoma) is served by Tahoe-Truckee Sierra Disposal, Inc. The south portion of the County (including Somerset, Grizzly Flats and Mt. Aukum) is served by Amador Disposal, Inc.
 - A very sparsely populated area in the southeast portion of the County is unassigned for service.
- F10. The City of Placerville and the El Dorado Hills Community Services District administer their own franchise agreements with their service providers. The remainder of the waste disposal service agreements within the County are administered by the County itself.
- F11. The European Union has adopted a law forbidding landfills by 2005.
- F12. The Director of Environmental Management researched what has been done by companies in Europe to provide technology to compensate for the elimination of landfills.
- F13. The Director ascertained that Herof, a German company, has provided equipment for many European cities. By use of the technology provided by such equipment, the moisture content of total waste is removed, reducing the total waste volume by approximately 30%. The equipment also separates ferrous and non-ferrous metals,

and separates different colors of glass by the use of an optical scanner. The remainder of the waste is baled and burned in co-generation plants to produce electricity.

- F14. The Director is encouraging both WMI and South Tahoe Refuse Company to obtain and use within the County the technology presently being used in Europe.
- F15. The Director is of the belief that South Tahoe Refuse Company could have that technology online within a year, because the Company already has land and a building to house the required equipment. The Director is also of the belief that the use of such technology by WMI could become operational within two years.

Recommendations

- R1. The Director should continue to urge the companies serving the County to acquire appropriate technology for the disposition of solid waste, so that the County conforms to state law and avoids potential penalties.
- R2. The Director should continue to research methods of disposition of the baled remainder and residue of solid waste.

Responses Required for Findings

F1 through F15 El Dorado County Board of Supervisors

Responses Required for Recommendations

R1 and R2 El Dorado County Board of Supervisors

(This page is blank)