

## PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

### *El Dorado County Waste Disposal System*

#### **Reason for the Report**

The Grand Jury selected the waste disposal system of the County for a 2002/2003 general review.

#### **Scope of the Investigation**

The members of the Grand Jury:

- Interviewed the El Dorado County Director of Environmental Management;
- Visited the Diamond Springs waste disposal facility on February 18, 2003;
- Was briefed on the process of sorting recyclables;
- Inspected the buildings and grounds of the Diamond Springs facility;
- Reviewed Grand Jury reports for 2000/2001 and 2001/2002 and found no findings or recommendations pertaining to waste management.

#### **Background**

The County was mandated by the State of California to reduce, by 50 percent, the amount of waste going to landfills by 2002. An extension was allowed to July 2005, with a good faith review in July 2004. The Grand Jury investigation revealed that the County of El Dorado is not making good progress toward meeting the State mandate. The contractor is recycling about 25 percent of total waste while other waste removal companies are recycling at least 45 percent. A \$10,000 per day fine for violation of the State's mandate is possible after the July 2004 state review.

The County is reviewing the contract with the contractor to determine if the contractor is moving toward compliance with the State mandate. To help meet this mandate, the contractor replaced upper management in November 2002 at the Diamond Springs facility. The new manager has stated they are now recycling at least 25 percent of the waste. New programs such as Blue Bags and Yellow Bags for recycling material are being considered.

Non-recycled trash is trucked to a landfill near Reno, Nevada. Mixed recyclables are sent to the contractor's sorting facility near Lodi, California. Some of cardboard and newspapers are baled at the Diamond Springs facility for resale to recycling companies. All measurements are tracked by incoming and outgoing weights. With County growth on the rise the Diamond Springs facility may not be able to meet the demand. The entire facility will probably need to be replaced or modernized to increase capacity.

At present the facility, with approximately 63 employees, operates from 6:00a.m to 6:00p.m. seven days a week. It is closed only two days a year, Independence Day and Christmas Day.

## **Findings**

F1. The waste management contractor is currently reducing the waste to landfills by 25%.

***Response to F1: The respondent agrees with the finding.***

F2. The State of California has extended the County's required date of compliance with the State mandate to July 2005, with a good faith review to be conducted in July 2004.

***Response to F2: The respondent disagrees partially with the finding.*** The California Integrated Waste Management Board (CIWMB) has extended the required date of compliance to July 2004. If necessary, the County may request an additional extension to July of 2005.

F3. The fine to the County for not meeting the mandate is \$10,000 per day.

***Response to F3: The respondent agrees with the finding.*** The County "may" face fines "up to" \$10,000 per day for not meeting the mandate. There are many factors that the CIWMB uses in determining whether or not to issue a fine, as well as the amount of the fine. One factor is whether or not the County has made a "good faith effort" to increase the diversion of solid waste from the landfill. El Dorado County has implemented a multitude of programs aimed at increasing recycling throughout the County.

F4. The County is reviewing its contract with the contractor.

***Response to F4: The respondent agrees with the finding.*** The County is presently in the process of writing a new franchise agreement with the contractor.

F5. The contractor is trucking non-recycled waste to a landfill near Reno, Nevada, and mixed recyclables to their facility near Lodi, California.

***Response to F5: The respondent agrees with the finding.***

F6. The Diamond Springs facility has new management.

***Response to F6: The respondent agrees with the finding.***

F7. The growth of the County may exceed the capacity of waste processing at the Diamond Springs facility in three or four years.

***Response to F7: The respondent agrees with the finding***

## **Recommendation**

The County should establish, in conjunction with the contractor, a plan that will guarantee compliance.

