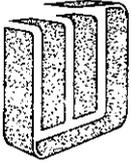


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METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Barbara E. Duff
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

March 31, 1992

To: Board of Directors (Executive Committee--Action)
(Water Problems Committee--Action)

From: General Manager

Subject: Water Resource Protection from Landfill Contamination

Report

During the last several years, Metropolitan has taken steps to help protect Southern California's irreplaceable local groundwater and surface water resources from potential contamination from landfills. Metropolitan's efforts as summarized in the attached table have addressed regional waste disposal plans, legislation, regulations, and specific landfill projects in coordination with concerned member agencies.

There is good reason to be concerned that municipal solid waste facilities are properly sited, designed, and managed in that they are permanent potential sources of groundwater contamination. Of particular concern is that:

- Landfill waste will not degrade into a benign state and will always have the potential for contamination until removed; and
- Modern landfill lining systems, while an improvement over older systems, still are not a guarantee against leakage, which is difficult to correct, especially with time.

Our efforts in dealing with landfill issues have not been easy. There is presently a nationwide shortage of disposal capacity. Good landfill sites are hard to find in Southern California and almost nobody wants a landfill in their community. A formidable waste management industry has evolved, and its efforts to create and expand landfills typically overwhelm our efforts to protect water resources. While we have contributed to precluding some landfills from threatening water resources in the San Gabriel Basin and in north San Diego County, these proposals require continued attention because of ongoing efforts by their proponents. We have been less successful in influencing proposed regulations that would protect groundwater quality,

primarily because of the significant and long-term lobbying efforts of the landfill industry.

We have found that it is difficult to be effective in resolving landfill questions without devoting significant staff resources and consultant services to what are typically very complex issues. In light of the personnel freeze and consultant budget limitation, we find it necessary to carefully allocate our available resources. Accordingly, we expect to achieve limited impact regarding new regulations and proposed solid waste facilities. However, in light of our previous investment in the precedent-setting Azusa Landfill litigation, we intend to continue participation through a formalized task force which is addressing the problem under local leadership.

In conclusion, we are proceeding to assist member agencies where local water resource protection from landfill contamination is of regional significance, with recognition that the responsibility for the region's long-term waste disposal needs lies with designated State and local waste management agencies.

Board Committee Assignments

This letter was referred for action to:

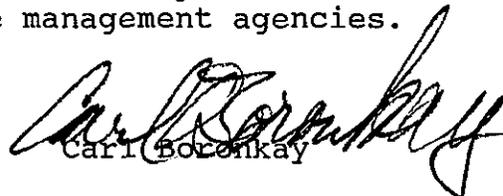
The Water Problems Committee pursuant to Section 2481(i) of Metropolitan's Administrative Code granting it authority regarding policies dealing with underground storage of water.

The Executive Committee pursuant to Section 2417(e) of Metropolitan's Administrative Code granting it authority regarding policies and procedures to be considered by the Board.

Recommendation

EXECUTIVE AND WATER PROBLEMS COMMITTEES FOR ACTION.

It is recommended that your Board adopt a policy of supporting member agency efforts to protect the quality of regionally significant local water resources from landfill contamination, while recognizing that the responsibility for Southern California's long-term waste disposal needs lies with designated State and local waste management agencies.



Carl Boronkay

AS:vb

Attachment

Metropolitan's Landfill Activities

Azusa Landfill Expansion: Metropolitan, in cooperation with local agencies, has so far prevailed in halting expansion of an existing landfill located in a gravel pit in a critical recharge area of the San Gabriel Basin. Presently, Metropolitan is sharing the cost and staff effort of defending against legal and regulatory challenges by the landfill owner, Browning-Ferris Industries (BFI), by participating in the Azusa Landfill Task Force with local agencies.

North San Diego County Landfill: Metropolitan in cooperation with the San Diego County Water Authority successfully convinced the County Public Works Department to reevaluate its Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) siting analysis with greater attention to water resources and imported water pipelines. The Water Authority is presently handling most of the water resource coordination on the new siting analysis.

North Orange County Landfill: Metropolitan provided comment on the Draft EIR regarding groundwater resources and potential aqueduct alignments.

Sunshine Canyon Landfill Expansion: Through the EIR process, Metropolitan received assurance from landfill owner BFI that it will correct existing leakage and ensure that the project will not contaminate Metropolitan's unlined water tunnel. Metropolitan coordinated its concerns with the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power. Presently, Metropolitan is reviewing the adequacy of an installed leachate interception trench and the landfill monitoring system.

Eagle Mountain Landfill: Metropolitan provided comments regarding groundwater resources and proximity to the Colorado River Aqueduct through the Draft EIR process and Colorado River Basin Regional Water Quality Control Board hearings. This effort is ongoing. This immense project would potentially use satellite trash sorting stations in Southern California's urban areas and could become the region's first trash-by-rail facility. This landfill is not associated in any way with Metropolitan's Eagle Mountain Pumping Plant.

Los Angeles County Integrated Waste Management Plan: Metropolitan provided comments on the Draft EIR with attention to siting and water resource factors.

State Water Resource Control Board Regulations: Metropolitan provided comments and suggested changes to the draft Chapter 15 Regulations regarding landfill monitoring. None of Metropolitan's comments were adopted.

Integrated Waste Management Board Regulations: Metropolitan provided comments and suggested changes regarding proposed landfill siting regulations. Hearings on this matter are yet to be scheduled.

Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board Basin Plan: Metropolitan is continuing to provide substantial data and supporting comments on proposed general prohibition of siting or expanding landfills in sand and gravel pits. This effort is being closely coordinated with the Azusa Landfill Task Force.

Legislation: Metropolitan has analyzed and supported certain legislation regarding solid waste disposal.

Miscellaneous: Metropolitan provided comments regarding a number of waste transfer facilities and has tracked various regulatory actions.