

Los Angeles County Solid Waste Management Committee/
Integrated Waste Management Task Force

Minutes of April 21, 2005

Special Meeting at the Commerce City Hall
2535 Commerce Way, Commerce, CA

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Albert Avoian, Business/Commerce Representative
Margaret Clark, League of California Cities-Los Angeles Division
Joe Massey, Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries
Michael Miller, League of California Cities-Los Angeles Division
Mike Mohajer, General Public Representative

COMMITTEE MEMBERS REPRESENTED BY OTHERS:

Thomas Garthwaite, rep. by Ken Murray, County of L.A. Dept. of Health Services
Rita Robinson, rep. by Steve Fortune, City of Los Angeles Bureau of Sanitation
Jim Stahl, rep. by Charles Boehmke, County Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County
Don Wolfe, rep. by Carlos Ruiz, County of Los Angeles Dept. of Public Works
Ben Wong, rep. by John McTaggart, League of California Cities-Los Angeles Division

COMMITTEE MEMBERS NOT PRESENT:

Christine F. Andersen, City of Long Beach
David Kim, City of Los Angeles Appointee
Betsey Landis, Environmental Organization Representative
Gerry Miller, City of Los Angeles Appointee
Ron Saldana, Los Angeles County Disposal Association
Barry Wallerstein, South Coast Air Quality Management District

OTHERS PRESENT:

Paul Alva, County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works
Brian Appel, Changing World Technologies, Inc.
George De La O, County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works
Judith Fries, County Counsel
Lee Miller, County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works
Coby Skye, County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works
Ed Wheless, County Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 1:15 p.m. Task Force members reviewed a revised roster (attached) as Mr. Mike Miller announced the recent changes in Task Force membership.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MARCH 17, 2005

A motion was made to approve the minutes of March 17, 2005. The motion passed unanimously.

III. RECAP AND DISCUSSION ON THE COMMERCE REFUSE-TO-ENERGY FACILITY TOUR

Mr. Ed Wheless, of the County Sanitation Districts (CSD), presented a history of the Commerce Refuse-to-Energy Facility (CREF), which uses an innovative system to transform residual waste and generate electricity for thousands of southern California homes. Located in the City of Commerce, CREF was developed through an agreement between CSD and Commerce in 1981 to demonstrate that refuse-to-energy is a viable alternative to landfills and other solid waste management methods.

Originally intended as a 240 ton per day (tpd), 5 megawatt, multiple small-unit facility, CREF eventually became a 300 tpd, 10 megawatt, single-unit facility which uses state-of-the-art air pollution control devices. Through grant funding, competitive bidding, an equal partnership between Commerce and CSD, and bond sales, CREF was designed, financed, and constructed during the course of several years. He attributed the facility's success to the partnership, the facility's sound design, and a long-term purchase agreement with Southern California Edison. Mr. Wheless stated since CREF began operation in 1987, it has consistently maintained low emissions.

IV. REPORT FROM THE ALTERNATIVE TECHNOLOGY ADVISORY SUBCOMMITTEE

Mr. Paul Alva provided a summary of the Alternative Technology Advisory Subcommittee meeting. Mr. Alva stated that URS Corporation would submit to the Subcommittee at its May meeting a draft of the final report. This report discusses conversion technologies and recommends potential materials recovery facility (MRF) operators with whom the Task Force can partner to develop a demonstration conversion technology facility.

V. WASTE BOARD'S CONVERSION TECHNOLOGY REPORT TO LEGISLATURE

Mr. Mike Mohajer provided an update on the Waste Board's Conversion Technology Report to the Legislature (attached). Mr. Mohajer stated that on April 19, 2005, the Waste Board rescinded its Conversion Technology Report as a result of stakeholder input received following the adoption of the Report on March 15, 2005. Mr. Mohajer stated that Waste Board staff was directed to delete from the Report any information that was not specifically called for in Assembly Bill 2770 and return to the Board with a revised Report for consideration on May 11, 2005.

After discussion, a motion was made to send a letter to Assembly Member Hancock, Senator Kuehl, and Senator Lowenthal, asking for written clarification of their position on the Waste Board's Conversion Technology Report and recommendations. Copies of this letter are to be sent to the Assembly Speaker, Senate President Pro Tem, and other legislators. The motion passed unanimously.

Another motion was made to send a letter to the 88 cities requesting they take formal action to support the Waste Board's Conversion Technology Report first adopted on March 15, 2005. A sample letter is to be included that cities may use when drafting their letters of support. The motion passed unanimously.

Another motion was made to send a letter to the Waste Board, expressing the Task Force's appreciation and support of their March 15 action to adopt the Conversion Technology Report and also its disappointment at hearing the Report had been rescinded. The motion passed unanimously.

VI. STATUS OF AB 1090 AND SB 420

Mr. Mike Mohajer provided a status on AB 1090, which would modify the solid waste management hierarchy and place conversion technologies and other beneficial use technologies on equal footing with recycling and composting, but before transformation and landfilling. The Bill would also provide diversion credit for materials handled at conversion facilities. Mr. Mohajer reported that this Bill had been turned into a two-year Bill and workshops would be conducted to discuss conversion technologies, the results of which could impact any decisions related to the passage of this Bill. Mr. Mohajer stated he would notify Task Force members once workshop dates were scheduled.

Mr. Mohajer also provided a status on Senate Bill 420, which would require all jurisdictions achieve a 75 percent waste diversion rate by 2015. Mr. Mohajer stated this Bill was not feasible given many jurisdictions had yet to meet the 50 percent diversion mandate from AB 939.

A motion was made for the Task Force to send a letter of opposition since some jurisdictions have yet to meet the 50 percent diversion mandate. The letter should also indicate the Task Force will support this Bill when additional tools/programs (e.g., conversion technologies) are allowed for consideration of credit to help meet the proposed 75 percent diversion mandate. The motion passed unanimously.

VII. LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Mr. Coby Skye provided a status on the following Legislative Bills (attached).

- AB 177—Introduced by Bogh

This Spot Bill would redefine transformation and biomass conversion and delete the ten percent limit for waste diversion through biomass conversion.

- AB 399—Introduced by Montanez

This Bill would require owners of multi-family dwellings constructed after May 1, 2007, to arrange for onsite recycling services for residents.

A motion was made for the Task Force to send a letter of opposition. The motion passed 9 to 1 with the General Public representative abstaining.

- AB 727—Introduced by Bermudez

This Spot Bill would expand the solid waste management hierarchy to include recovery through conversion technology or other beneficial use technologies.

- AB 1049—Introduced by Koretz

This Bill would require the placement of a label on specified beverage and food containers which informs consumers that the container is recyclable.

- AB 1103—Introduced by Karnette

This Bill would require bicycle retailers to inform customers that bicycle donations to charitable organizations are encouraged by the State rather than disposing of them through the trash.

- AB 1193—Introduced by Hancock

This Bill would prohibit the mass mailings of CDs and DVDs for commercial purposes unless a postage paid return mailing envelope is provided.

A motion was made for the Task Force to send a letter of support. The motion passed 9 to 1 with the Business/Commerce representative opposing.

- SB 369—Introduced by Simitian

This Bill would require Cal EPA to establish a program allowing producers and distributors to affix a “Green Bear Eco-Label” to their approved product or service.

- SB 563—Introduced by Alarcon

This Spot Bill would establish a State certified green business program.

- SB 926—Introduced by Florez

This Bill would ban the importation of sewage sludge into any county if it is generated by a public agency in another county.

A motion was made for the Task Force to send a letter of opposition. The motion passed unanimously.

- SB 928—Introduced by Lowenthal

This Spot Bill would change the required diversion rate for jurisdictions to an unspecified number beginning January 1, 2011.

VIII. PRESENTATION ON THERMAL DEPOLYMERIZATION

Mr. Brian Appel, of Changing World Technologies, Inc. (CWT), conducted a PowerPoint presentation (attached) on his company’s thermal depolymerization technology, also known as thermal conversion process (TCP). Mr. Appel stated that CWT, in conjunction with ConAgra Foods, Inc.,

has implemented its TCP technology in the food industry by successfully converting turkey waste into oil. He stated that the company's facility breaks down and reassembles the long chains of organic polymers to create clean fuel and specialty chemicals. It converts an average of 250 tons of turkey waste each day, resulting in a daily output of approximately 400 barrels of oil.

IX. COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES ENVIRONMENTAL OUTREACH

Mr. Lee Miller provided a brief overview of the County of Los Angeles' countywide environmental outreach programs (attached). He stated that the programs are intended to educate residents about environmental issues through a wide variety of outreach methods, including media advertising and community events. Programs conducted by the County of Los Angeles include:

- Smart Gardening—Workshops on backyard composting, worm composting, grass recycling, water-wise gardening, and fire-wise gardening techniques.
- Waste Tire Amnesty Day—Waste tire collection and recycling events for residents; upcoming event to be held at five locations.
- Household Hazardous/Electronic Waste—household hazardous and electronic waste collection events for residents held throughout the year.
- Environmental Defenders—Outreach through interactive elementary school assemblies to educate students.
- Generation Earth—Encourages secondary students to take an active role in addressing environmental issues and participating in service-learning projects.
- Residential Recycling—Outreach to encourage residents to recycle at curbside.
- Business Recycling—Encourages businesses located in the unincorporated areas to implement or enhance their recycling programs.

X. BROWN ACT PRESENTATION

Ms. Judith Fries, of County Counsel, presented an overview of the Brown Act. She stated the Brown Act is applicable to all legislative bodies, including standing committees/boards/commissions which have regularly scheduled meeting days and are established by a governing body. Ms. Fries added that the only exception is advisory committees that are established, have less than a quorum of the main committee's members, and are not a standing committee.

Ms. Fries asserted that meetings must be open and public. She stated that meeting locations must be accessible to the public, that a notice of any meeting must be posted at least 72 hours in advance for regular meetings

and 24 hours in advance for special meetings in a place that the public has access to. The public must have the opportunity to attend any meeting and speak on any subject matter. Ms. Fries also stated that committee members cannot discuss things that are not on the agenda, unless the public happens to raise the issue, to which committee members can briefly respond but not fully discuss.

Ms. Fries stated that in the case of matters for which immediate action must be taken, but were not noticed on the agenda, committee members can, by a two-thirds vote, decide to discuss and take action on the issues. Ms. Fries explained that a meeting is any time one has quorum and discusses official business. Committee members are not allowed, under the Brown Act, to conduct serial meetings, during which members may discuss something that is then relayed and discussed with other members. Committees can hold teleconferences, once certain requirements are met.

Ms. Fries defined "taking action" as making a collective decision by a majority of members or collectively committing/promising to make a decision. She stated that any action must be taken at a meeting, and that committee members should avoid any use of direct communication, personal intermediaries, or technological devices (e.g., e-mails, telephone calls) to develop a concurrence as to the action to be taken on an item. Ms. Fries added that e-mails on a specific agenda item should only be sent to impart information and should be made available to the public.

XI. TASK FORCE COMMUNICATIONS AND OPERATING PROCEDURES

Postponed to the June 16, 2005, meeting.

XII. NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting date is tentatively scheduled for May 19, 2005 at 1 p.m.

XIII. OPEN DISCUSSION / PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:11 p.m.

Attach.