

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

Minutes for October 19, 2023
Los Angeles County Public Works
900 South Fremont Avenue
Alhambra, California

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jorgel Chavez, League of California Cities
Margaret Clark, League of California Cities
Eddie De La Riva, League of California Cities
Mike Mohajer, General Public Representative
Jim Smith, City of Los Angeles
Jordan R. Sisson, Los Angeles County Disposal Association

COMMITTEE MEMBERS REPRESENTED BY OTHERS:

Barbara Ferrer, rep by Karen Gork, Los Angeles County Public Health
Wayne Nastri, rep by Jack Cheng, South Coast Air Quality Management District
Mark Pestrella, rep by Emiko Thompson, Los Angeles County Public Works
Barbara Romero, rep by Bernadette Halverson, City of Los Angeles Bureau of Sanitation
Eric Lopez, rep by Erin Rowland, Long Beach Public Works

COMMITTEE MEMBERS NOT PRESENT:

Jeff Farano, Sr., Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries
Robert Ferrante, Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts
Rafael Prieto, City of Los Angeles

OTHERS PRESENT:

Wayde Hunter, North Valley Coalition of Concerned Citizens
Adylene Gonzalez, California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery
(CalRecycle)
Jonathan Brazile, Office of County Counsel Los Angeles County
Josephine Chen, Los Angeles County Public Works
Charles Darensbourg, Los Angeles County Public Works
Perla Gomez, Los Angeles County Public Works
Tran Kiem, Los Angeles County Public Works
Dave Nguyen, Los Angeles County Public Works
Fahim Rahimi, Los Angeles County Public Works
Carol Saucillo, Los Angeles County Public Works
Coby Skye, Los Angeles County Public Works
Airon Tee, Los Angeles County Public Works
Kawsar Vazifdar, Los Angeles County Public Works

I. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order at 1:04 p.m. by Mr. Mike Mohajer.

II. APPROVAL OF THE AUGUST 17, AND SEPTEMBER 21, 2023 MINUTES

Ms. Margaret Clark made a motion to approve the August 17, 2023, minutes and Mr. Mike Mohajer seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

At the request of Mr. Mohajer, Ms. Clark made a motion to postpone the approval of the September 21, 2023, minutes to next month for additional revision, and Ms. Emiko Thompson seconded. Motion passed unanimously. Mr. Mohajer commented that a portion of the revision include Chiquita Canyon Landfill (CCL). He mentioned attending the September 6, 2023, South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD) Hearing Board's Stipulated Order of Abatement (SOA) and provided written comments to AQMD in a [letter](#) dated September 5, 2023, regarding the recent odor problems at CCL. He identified staff report errors with CCL's location in relation to the neighboring residents and the distance from the Landfill, especially with the Val Verde community, the age of the Landfill that dates to 1962 and operated as a Class II landfill from 1977 to 1997, which meant they were allowed to accept hazardous waste.

Mr. Mohajer added other comments including: 1) an inquiry on the authority of the Director of Public Works to not process letters approved by the Task Force; 2) legislative letters approved by the Task Force to send regarding Assembly Bill (AB) 2 and AB 1238 that were not sent; and 3) since a Dimethyl Sulfide Committee was formed, and concurrently, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors elected a Chiquita Canyon Landfill Community Advisory Committee to essentially do the same thing, Mr. Mohajer asked what the difference between the committees was and if they could be combined.

III. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

Mr. Mohajer commented that the County Ordinance requires that the Vice-Chair be elected and serve yearly terms with no more than two consecutive terms. Therefore, Mr. Sam Shammas may no longer serve as Vice-Chair. Mr. Mohajer made a motion to nominate Ms. Clark with the League of California Cities - Los Angeles County Division to serve as Vice-Chair, and noted she was the previous Vice-Chair. Mr. Jim Smith seconded the motion. There were no other nominations and the vote for Ms. Clark to serve as Vice-Chair passed unanimously. Ms. Clark accepted the nomination and resumed the meeting as Vice-Chair.

IV. UPDATE OF TASK FORCE LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Mr. Jonathan Brazile with the Office of County Counsel, Los Angeles County (County Counsel) provided an [update](#) on Task Force legislative authority.

Mr. Mohajer stated that Task Force duties were expanded by the Board after approval of the majority of cities containing the majority of incorporated cities' population to also act as a Task Force, pursuant to AB 939. Mr. Brazile explained that the ordinance the current Task Force operates under is a County Ordinance that was specifically created, which recreates this Task Force for the purpose of complying with that Act (AB 939) and can be found in [County Code 3.67.080](#).

With Chapter [7.030 of the Board Policy Manual](#) and the Act, Ms. Clark noted that one policy indicated the Task Force not being able to take an advocacy position and the other indicated the Task Force may recommend positions. Mr. Brazile explained that positions could be recommended to the Board through the Chief Executive Office (CEO). The Task Force could present a recommended position to the CEO and then the CEO would review it to make certain it is consistent with County policy. Mr. Brazile stated that neither this Task Force, nor any other County commission, can take a specific position on pending legislation without coordinating with the CEO and presenting it to the Board. Mr. Brazile stated that the purpose was so that the County presents a united front in terms of positions taken for legislation.

Mr. Smith commented that in the past, this governing body had taken positions on bills and would then put a letter together to send to the Legislature. He asked if that was something the Task Force should not be doing. Mr. Brazile reiterated the purpose is to ensure that the Task Force is in compliance with County policy, which past practice was not aligned with. Mr. Brazile added that there is coordination with the CEO to present at next month's Task Force meeting, a clear process for the Task Force to follow when taking a position on legislation.

Ms. Clark commented that the presentation stated not being able to take an advocacy position but did not indicate taking an opposed position. Mr. Brazile responded that the interpretation of advocacy could be advocacy for or against any legislation. Ms. Clark commented that what is being said is contrary to monitor, analyze and review legislative bills, and propose legislation as needed, and what the Task Force has been doing for decades is wasted. Ms. Erin Rowland's interpretation was that there is another step in the process by recommending the Task Force opinion to the CEO. Mr. Brazile stated that the Task Force is considered as being advisory to the Board.

Ms. Clark believes that the Board is very overwhelmed with all the things they must do and would think the Board would appreciate someone at a lower level like the Task Force, to review bills. Mr. Brazile stated that the process is to go through the CEO, which is an extra step and still allows the Task Force to take positions.

Ms. Clark asked if it was the CEO that raised this issue because the Task Force has worked hard for decades and is now being told they are irrelevant, which is offensive.

Mr. Brazile stated that when the Task Force takes a position it needs to comply with the process set forth by the Board Policy Manual. Mr. Mohajer asked if the other 88 jurisdictions within Los Angeles County, had to comply with the process. Mr. Brazile responded that the other 88 cities are not subject to County Board Policy and this Task Force was assigned to Los Angeles County. Mr. Mohajer asked what the level was between County Board Policy and County Ordinance and asked if the policy overrides the ordinance. Mr. Brazile responded that the Board policy does not override the ordinance but if the policy overrode the State statute or perhaps even the County ordinance, then it would not be valid. Setting a separate process is not in contradiction with the ordinance or State statute. Mr. Mohajer then commented that there is an existing ordinance that was implemented over 40 years ago and has served the citizens of the County quite well, with the Board knowing and acting as a Countywide organization.

Mr. Coby Skye commented that this clarification does not mean that the Task Force is irrelevant. There is just an additional step to ensure consistency between the Task Force taking a position and Board policy, which had already been largely in alignment for years. Mr. Mohajer asked how this issue addressed the City of Los Angeles City Council appointing three members of this governing body and cannot take a position. He added that the main reason the County Ordinance was created was because the County was so large with 88 jurisdictions that a group could get work to elected officials in Sacramento in a timely manner since legislation moves so quickly, essentially moving from morning to night. Mr. Mohajer also asked since the Task Force now must go through the Board, then why would it not also go through the City of Los Angeles since the City of Los Angeles also holds three seats on this governing body, or the other member agencies of the Task Force. Since the Board policy was never raised before, Mr. Mohajer asked again why the issue is being raised now, which he felt would destroy the effectiveness of this governing body that has served the citizens for years. Mr. Skye believed that this Task Force would still be just as effective and with the additional step, does not mean it takes away any authority or responsibility from the Task Force. It simply means the process is being adjusted to be consistent with Board policies. Mr. Skye also mentioned that within Public Works, the issue was raised about how the Task Force operated as compared to other

County commissions and task forces related to legislative issues. County Counsel was asked to investigate, and their determination was presented today. The Task Force may review and analyze legislation, but an advocacy position requires going to the Board through the existing CEO process.

Ms. Clark asked that a list of commissions not taking positions be provided to the Task Force. Mr. Skye responded that a full list of all commissions would be provided. Mr. Mohajer added that the list should be of all "Countywide" commissions and not County commissions. Mr. Skye agreed the list would note which commissions were "countywide".

Ms. Clark, who has been part of her city council for 32 years and served on this Task Force for 28 years, shared concerns on how fast things move in Sacramento and how they can quickly gut and amend bills, and if there are too many extra steps, then the Task Force will not be effective. She would be okay if positions are reviewed by the Board in a timely manner, but if the process takes two or three months, then the Task Force is wasting its time. Mr. Skye responded it would certainly not take months and a presentation could be provided at next month's Task Force meeting with the recommended process that can be written into the guidelines, policies, and procedures that the future Task Force and staff will be able to follow. Task Force concerns ensued.

Mr. Jordan Sisson asked if the plan for today was for the Task Force to take an action or would the recommended process be presented next month. Mr. Skye responded that today's presentation was for information only and the recommendation for the new process would be presented next month for the Task Force's consideration. Mr. Sisson offered that the following would be helpful if addressed at the next meeting: 1) answer the question of why this all came about, 2) identify other County commissions that are County vs. Countywide, and 3) a clearer sense of which CEO policies are being applied to the Task Force as he has reviewed over a dozen policies from 1985 and 2013. Mr. Sisson stated that what he is hearing from other Task Force members is that this body has been very effective up to this point. Mr. Sisson asked if it would be feasible for an amendment to be made to Subsection G of [County Code 3.67.080](#), that would provide this Task Force the same abilities they have done for over 20 years. The Board adopted amendment would become codified and would supersede Board policy. The other option would be a revised Board policy. Mr. Brazile responded that County Counsel can look into those options and reiterated the CEO was just an extra step for cohesion and was not intended to limit the position of this body, and at the next meeting more information of what the process looks like would be presented.

Ms. Emiko Thompson commented that there are several options and that there may be concerns about the timing, but if Public Works staff were to come back to the Task Force next month with a process and depending how the process reads, the Task Force may be pleasantly surprised that there is in fact a way to get it done quickly while also being consistent with County legislative priorities, which may be an optimal way to go. She stated that at next month's meeting a suite of recommendations for the Task Force to consider, including a process to quickly take positions and make recommendations to the CEO, could be presented.

Mr. Mohajer advised that because the issue was Countywide, Public Works addressed the 88 cities and they approved the County Ordinance, which is what the State law requires. Therefore, Mr. Mohajer believed any changes to the ordinance also requires the approval from the 88 cities. Mr. Mohajer added in addition to expediting the process, he wanted to make certain the County does not create a way for cities to ask for the same opportunity. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Wayne Hunter of the North Valley Coalition of Concerned Citizens and as a member of the public, stated he had attended Task Force meetings for the last 14 years and had never seen a Task Force position taken on a bill that the Board disagreed with. Therefore, he felt the Task Force was doing their job, but now what Mr. Hunter sees is two more levels of approval, including the CEO and Board, for a process that needs to be expedited. The CEO needs a limit of time to review the Task Force position on a bill and if the CEO decides it does not fit policy, then the CEO would need to return to the Task Force to justify why it was being rejected, which must be timely. He stated that this Task Force represents the 88 cities, which was the whole idea bringing them together, and they are discussing municipal solid waste. Ms. Rowland recommended to the Task Force to close this discussion and have the Task Force requests that were made, addressed at next month's meeting. All members agreed.

Mr. Mohajer asked Mr. Brazile about the Privacy Notice on CCL's website that requires the public to accept and agree to the terms of their Privacy Policy, which states that personal information can be shared such as social security number, in order to view reports. Mr. Mohajer was very concerned about the issue and asked Mr. Brazile to investigate the matter and resolve the issue with Waste Connections since the Task Force is not a customer of Waste Connections. Mr. Brazile responded that staff had brought up the concern to him and he began looking into it. Mr. Brazile stated that the issue would be elevated to the proper person if it is not under his purview, and believed he could provide an update at the next meeting.

V. EVALUATION OF WASTE HAULING SERVICES

Mr. Steve Milewski provided the following update to the Task Force:

On October 17, 2023, the Board approved a motion for the evaluation of waste hauling services for the unincorporated communities of Altadena, Kinneloa Mesa, and Marina Del Rey, after numerous complaints from communities during the 2022 transition period of changing waste haulers. Universal Systems won the current contract after the contract for Athens Service expired in September 2022. Following are actions Public Works must take to the Board:

- Report back in 30 days with a one-year review of current waste hauling contracts for Altadena and Kinneloa Mesa (residential) and Marina Del Rey (commercial).
- Report back in 60 days with a summary and recommendations for service improvement taken from community meetings.
- Report back in 60 days with grant opportunities, funding streams, and recommendations to assist in the implementation of organic waste collection.
- Report back in 90 days with an evaluation of the County's requirements in the solicitation process for waste hauling contracts.

Mr. Mohajer commented that there was discussion at the Board meeting regarding vehicles dropping oil on the street and he asked how Public Works addresses that issue. Mr. Milewski responded that Public Works has contract monitors that patrol the areas and Universal Waste Systems is directed to clean up the spills. Mr. Mohajer asked what the relation was to County Public Health in reference to spilled oil. Mr. Milewski responded he was not aware of any direct connection or their responsibility. Mr. Mohajer asked if waste haulers must acquire a permit from County Public Health to operate. Mr. Milewski responded yes. Mr. Mohajer continued that to acquire the permit, certain requirements must be met, such as testing and monitoring. Mr. Milewski stated he was not familiar with their requirements. Mr. Mohajer expressed his concern for the public and suggested that Public Works contact the permit section of County Public Health to address the issue.

Since the approved Board motion also mentioned bears getting into containers, Mr. Mohajer asked about the type of containers being used. Mr. Milewski responded that the containers currently being delivered are bear resistance carts, which are a thicker material and have a self-locking mechanism with a latch that bears are unable to access. Thus far, about 2/3 of the residents have received bear resistance carts.

Mr. Sisson asked if an update will be provided to the Task Force in terms of information or recommendations as he is aware that waste haulers have tried to meet supply chain issues, among other issues. He also asked if Public Works is looking for more recommendations or feedback from this governing body beyond today. Mr. Milewski responded that the Task Force is welcomed to provide any suggestions and today's presentation was for information, and due to the 30, 60, and 90-day deadlines, it would be very challenging to get a lot of feedback to implement into the response to the Board. Mr. Mohajer suggested that in the report back to the Board, staff could bring up the public health issue as well as informing that Public Works is working with a waste hauler representative on the Task Force to assist, which shows that Public Works is undertaking additional efforts for resolution.

VI. REPORT FROM THE FACILITY AND PLAN REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE (FPRS)

Mr. Mohajer reported the following at the FPRS meeting:

- Chiquita Canyon Landfill (CCL): Odors continue to increase. AQMD issued a Stipulated Order for Abatement (SOA) with items CCL must comply with. The SOA also included the formation of a Dimethyl Sulfide (DMS) committee consisting of subject matter experts to assist with the odors. Mr. Mohajer informed that staff would find out how the DMS committee will coordinate with CCL Community Advisory Committee.
- Sunshine Canyon Landfill (SCL): Odors continue to increase. Mr. Mohajer reported that on May 2, 2023, Regional Planning issued a Notice of Violation (NOV) to SCL, in response to a request from Public Works, for exceeding daily tonnages. On October 18, 2023, Public Works sent a [memo](#) to Regional Planning requesting Regional Planning to rescind the NOV, but does not mention on what basis. He also expressed concern that SCL may be a potential site for materials from Pacoima Dam, which is about 5,000,000 tons.

Mr. Mohajer commented that if Public Works requested Regional Planning to withdraw the NOV, due to the Landfill exceeding daily tonnages, then the community and public should know why and be notified. He made a motion for Public Works to explain, in writing, why Public Works recommended to Regional Planning to issue a NOV to SCL for exceeding daily tonnages, and why Public Works recommended that Regional Planning rescind the said NOV.

Ms. Clark seconded the motion. The motion passed with eight voting yes (Mr. Jorgel Chavez, Ms. Clark, Ms. Karen Gork, Ms. Bernadette Halverson,

Mr. Mohajer, Ms. Rowland, Mr. Sisson, and Mr. Jim Smith), and two abstaining (Mr. Jack Cheng and Ms. Thompson).

VII. REPORT FROM THE ALTERNATIVE TECHNOLOGY ADVISORY SUBCOMMITTEE (ATAS)

Mr. Fahim Rahimi reported the following at the ATAS meeting:

Tetra Tech provided a [presentation](#) on their potential sites for organic waste processing facilities. They also continue to work on:

- Preparing a Long-Term Solid Waste Disposal Needs Study for Antelope Valley in compliance with Lancaster Landfill Conditional Use Permit, Condition 92; which includes a high-level review of economic, environmental and technical considerations for anaerobic digestion (AD) and/or thermal conversion technology facility options.
- Performing a Countywide siting analysis and a detailed evaluation of three closed landfill sites, which will investigate land availability and land use compatibility, for the development of AD and/or thermal conversion technology facilities.
- Preparing a Fact Sheet and Power Point Presentation for the proposed AD Facility at Calabasas Landfill in support of community outreach.

Staff provided an update on upcoming conversion technology events and conferences that may also be found in the [Conversion Technology Newsletter](#).

VIII. LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Mr. Charles Darensbourg provided the following Legislative Update:

- The first year of the two-year legislative session ended, and the Legislature is on recess until January 3, 2024.
- The Governor had until October 14, 2023, to sign or veto bills sent to him. He signed and/or vetoed over 1,000 of the 2,062 bills introduced this year.
- The Governor's priorities strongly advocates for addressing homelessness, housing infrastructure, and mental health services.
- Legislation signed by the Governor will go into effect on January 1, 2024.

There were 55 State bills on the [Legislative Table](#), and no bills on the cover page for consideration. Staff provided an update on bills that were signed/chaptered and vetoed by the Governor.

Regarding AB 557, Ms. Clark asked if it was possible to acquire a quorum by teleconferencing. Mr. Darensbourg, could not recall the bill number, but stated there was a recent bill that allows a member through hardship to remote in. Ms. Clark requested that staff investigate so acquiring a quorum may be easier.

Mr. Sisson asked if Legislative Tables would continue to be available to the Task Force even with the possible changes to the governing body in relation to legislation. Mr. Darensbourg did not believe there would be a legislative update in November and December since the second half of the two-year legislative session begins in January 2024. Mr. Sisson commented that the legislative information provided by staff is invaluable, and Ms. Clark concurred.

Mr. Mohajer recommended, depending on what happens regarding the authority of the Task Force, to start looking into the details of the two-year bills that the Task Force took a support or oppose position on as Legislature reconvenes in January 2024. He stated this was an urgency that needs to move forward, at least with the existing regulations.

IX. CALRECYCLE UPDATE

Adylene Gonzalez provided an [update](#) to the Task Force.

X. PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Halverson announced the Los Angeles Sanitation and Environment released a [Request for Proposal](#) for the Processing and Marketing of Blue-Bin Materials from their Valley District. The deadline is November 28, 2023.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 3:12 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled to be held on Thursday, November 16, 2023, at 1 p.m.