



SIERRA
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SONOMA GROUP
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September 29, 2008

Chairman Mike Kerns
Sonoma County Board of Supervisors
575 Administration Drive, Room 100A
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

Re: Oppose Proposed Divestiture of Sonoma County Solid Waste System Assets

Dear Chairman Kerns;

On behalf of the Sonoma Group of the Sierra Club, I am sending this letter to urge the Board to not sell the Sonoma County landfill and our other solid waste system facilities to a private company. We believe that the public and environment is best served by maintaining these assets in public ownership.

Public ownership of our landfills has been established policy in Sonoma County since the inception of our modern solid waste disposal system.

We believe that the long haul of garbage to landfills out of the county is environmentally unsound and should be terminated as soon as possible. This can only be accomplished by safely reopening Sonoma County's Central Landfill.

We also recognize that there is a relationship between landfill ownership and the success of recycling programs. Privately owned landfills profit by maximizing the amount of material coming into the facility to be buried, while public owners treat the landfill as a valuable community resource to be conserved by maximizing recycling. The private owner's perspective also runs counter to our organization's goal to move toward a future with "zero waste."

Public ownership of the landfill guarantees that the environmental values of this community, as reflected by our elected leaders, will come before the profits of corporate executives and shareholders.

The system is a long-term economic asset for the public, an operation that has the ability to generate revenue through recycling and renewable energy production. These actions also

provide greenhouse gas emission credits that remain with the public, not sold to benefit others.

Public ownership also reduces the financial risks to the public that comes from being dependent on a private company with a geographic disposal monopoly.

The County should work cooperatively with the cities, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board, the environmental community and other stakeholders toward reopening the facility in a way that protects the environment and maintains our successful policy of public ownership of the landfill.

We recognize and appreciate the significance of the issues that led to the County's efforts to sell the County system. We also believe the long term consequences of the privatization of our landfill pose serious risks to Sonoma County. Therefore, we urge you to reject this approach and reexamine other solutions that meet the County's financial objectives while maintaining public ownership.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nabeel Al-Shamma', written in a cursive style.

Nabeel Al-Shamma
Sonoma Group Executive Committee

Cc: Valerie Brown, 1st District Supervisor
Tim Smith, 3rd District Supervisor
Paul Kelley, 4th District Supervisor
Mike Reilly, 5th District Supervisor