



November 8, 2006

TO: Alameda County Waste Management Authority Board

FROM: Karen Smith, Executive Director

BY: Brian Mathews, Senior Program Manager

RE: In-county Composting Project

At the July 2006 Authority Board meeting, the Board elected to meet at the end of the regularly scheduled monthly board meeting, as a whole to discuss the potential establishment of one or more in-county compost facilities. At the September meeting, the Board directed staff to send out letters to identify sites suitable for composting greenwaste and food scraps and to determine whether the proposer would be interested in pursuing composting operations in partnership with the Authority: Letters requesting sites were sent to:

1. Existing in-county solid waste facility operators;
2. Public agencies including the member agencies; and
3. Private entities.

Subsequent to receiving the letters, several jurisdictions asked what the approximate size requirements would be for composting operations and the amount of organics generated by each jurisdiction. A table answering these questions was distributed to the member agencies and is attached as Exhibit A.

The Board also directed staff to ask County Counsel for a legal opinion regarding whether composting facilities could be sited on land designated "Large Parcel Agriculture" under the Alameda County General Plan. Additionally, the Board asked staff to investigate the possibility of acquiring water for the property owned by the Authority off North Flynn Rd.

### **DISCUSSION:**

This memo is in four sections: Responses from County Counsel; Options for Acquiring Water for North Flynn Rd.; Responses from Site Identification Request; and Suggested Next Steps.

#### **A) Response from County Counsel**

Staff asked County Counsel to provide an opinion regarding the legality of siting composting facilities on unincorporated property designated "Large Parcel Agriculture" in the Alameda County General Plan. Staff also made inquiries regarding what restrictions and/or limitations the

East County Area Plan would impose on such a facility. The letter to County Counsel is attached in Exhibit B-1.

The County Counsel concluded composting facilities are an allowed use on land designated Large Parcel Agriculture in the Alameda County General Plan. The response from County Counsel is attached in Exhibit B-2.

### **B) Options for Acquiring Water for North Flynn Rd.**

At the September meeting, the Board directed staff to investigate the possibility of acquiring water for composting at the property owned by the Authority on North Flynn Rd. To that end, Karen Smith and Brian Mathews met with Jill Duerig, Zone 7 Assistant General Manager for Engineering, and Jim Horen, Advance Planning, to inquire into the possibility of acquiring water through Zone 7 infrastructure.

Zone 7 is the principal water wholesaler in the Tri-Valley area. Through several water retailers, Zone 7 supplies drinking water to Livermore, Dublin and Pleasanton. Zone 7 facilitates water acquisition, delivery and treatment in their role as a wholesaler.

Three sources of water were discussed: recycled water, non-treated, and treated water. Regardless of the water source, significant capital investment would be needed to serve the North Flynn Rd. site, including pumping infrastructure, pipeline construction, acquisition of pipeline easements and water holding facilities at the site. In addition, there would be the per unit cost of the water.

Recycled water: Recycled water or purple pipe water from the City of Livermore waste water treatment plant is available at the treatment plant. Options for using this water would be either trucking the recycled water to the North Flynn Rd. site in tank trucks or an extension of the purple pipe delivery system through the City of Livermore toward Greenville Rd. and then on to the North Flynn Rd. site. There are currently no plans to extend the purple pipe through the City of Livermore. An additional consideration is that the recycled water from the Livermore plant is high in elemental boron which at some levels can inhibit plant growth. Use of this water would likely require the 2:1 blending of non-treated water with the recycled water.

Non-treated water: Untreated water delivered via the South Bay Aqueduct could be available. The Authority would have to acquire the rights to water, which would be conveyed via the aqueduct to a “turnout” location where the necessary infrastructure to pump the water up to the North Flynn Road property would be located. Due to capacity constraints of the aqueduct, Zone 7 personnel believe it could be time consuming (i.e., take as much as ten years) to acquire new water rights and obtain the approvals necessary to pump additional water from the Delta. This assessment is based on the current concerns about Delta pumping impacts on the environment and the fact that it may be difficult to obtain approval for a new, permanent turnout off the South Bay Aqueduct from the California Department of Water Resources (DWR). However, an untreated water allocation might be acquired from an existing aqueduct user who is underutilizing their current allocation and is willing to sell that surplus.

Treated water: Treated water could be available from Zone 7 via a local water retailer (e.g., City of Livermore or California Water Service Company) at or near the Zone 7 treatment facility at

Patterson Pass Rd. Under this scenario, treated water would be allocated to the project, much like water is allocated to a new residential development project. Water would need to be allocated through the planning approval process (LAFCO) and “hook-up” fees would apply. The per-unit-cost of the water would be higher than the other scenarios because the water would be treated for consumption.

A feasibility study would need to be conducted to fully understand costs associated with the potential water sources listed above and the development of the infrastructure needed to deliver water to the North Flynn Rd. property. Zone 7 staff indicated they have the expertise to work closely with us on this effort, should the Board elect to move in this direction.

**C) Responses from Site Identification Request**

Letters were sent out to existing solid waste facility operators, public agencies and private entities at the end of September requesting a response by October 31<sup>st</sup>. All the responses are provided in Exhibit C.

Tables I, II, III below summarize the responses received and separate the responses into three categories, Composting Sites within Alameda County, Composting Sites outside Alameda County with in-county Transfer and No Site Identified.

<b>Table I - Composting Sites within Alameda County</b>		
<b>Site / Location</b>	<b>Proposed By</b>	<b>Site Ownership</b>
Jess Ranch off Hwy 580 (east of Altamont hills)	Biosolids Recycling Inc.	Joseph Jess
Jess Ranch off Hwy 580 (east of Altamont hills)	Material Recovery Industries Inc.	Joseph Jess
North Flynn Rd.	Material Recovery Industries Inc.	ACWMA
City of Hayward Waste Water Treatment Plant	Material Recovery Industries Inc.	City of Hayward
Altamont Landfill	Waste Mgmt of Alameda County	Waste Management
Wake Ave WWTP Oakland*	East Bay Municipal Utility District	EBMUD

\* *Proposal to Process Food Scraps through Anaerobic Digestion*

<b>Table II - Composting Sites outside Alameda County with in-county Transfer</b>		
<b>Site / Location</b>	<b>Proposed By</b>	<b>Site Ownership</b>
Composting in Santa Clara County and an Unidentified Transfer site in the City of Hayward	Zanker Rd. Resource Mgmt	Transfer site - Unknown. Composting site – Zanker
Composting Facility outside Alameda County with a Port of	Louie Pelligrini	Transfer site - Port of Oakland

Oakland Marine Transfer Facility		Composting site – Unknown
267 acres off Patterson Pass Rd. In San Joaquin County	Material Recovery Industries Inc.	Unknown

<b>Table III - No Sites Identified</b>		
<b>Site / Location</b>	<b>Proposed By</b>	<b>Site Ownership</b>
Not identified	NORCAL Waste Systems	Unknown

In addition to the responses above, the cities of Dublin and Newark responded stating that appropriate sites were not available in their jurisdictions.

#### **D) Suggested Next Steps**

In order to obtain further information, staff suggests the Board develop a list of appropriate questions at its November meeting and interview some or all of the proposers at its December Board meeting. Those invited to interview can be asked to prepare a brief presentation and be ready to answer the questions developed by the Board. Possible questions include:

- What is the proposed capacity (tons per day) of the site to be permitted?
- What is the access to the site?
- What is the source of water at the site?
- What is the size of the parcel?
- What is the current use at the site?
- What is the applicable zoning and general plan designation?
- What is the proximity to neighbors and what type of neighbors (businesses/residences)?
- Who owns the site and how will the site be controlled by the operator?
- In developing a public/private partnership using your site, what does the proposer need from the public partner and what benefits will they provide to the public partner?
- What type of composting operation is proposed?

An equal amount of time should be allocated for each site being proposed.

Staff recommends the Board finalize a list of questions and interview the proposers from Table I at the December Board meeting. The questions can be given to the proposers in advance for them to prepare a 5 minute presentation on each site with a 10 minute question / answer period to follow.