



**COUNTY OF MENDOCINO  
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

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April 10, 2012

Mendocino County Board of Supervisors  
501 Low Gap Road, Room 1090  
Ukiah, CA 95482

RE: WORK PLAN OPTIONS FOR ALTERNATE LEACHATE DISPOSAL — ENGINEERING  
AND PERMITTING (CASPAR – LAYTONVILLE/SOUTH COAST LANDFILLS)

Honorable Board Members:

MCDOT is recommending analysis that modifies leachate management at the County's landfills be considered.

During its meeting of January 10, 2012, the Board directed MCDOT to come back with options and a plan of action to reduce leachate disposal costs. A cursory review of landfills and some possible options were discussed with the County's outgoing monitoring consultant (Geo-Logic) with the following points for Board consideration and input:

- 1) The three closed landfills the County manages – Caspar, South Coast and Laytonville – are quite different in the type and quantity of leachate produced. The Laytonville Landfill has a different solid waste water contact dynamic and limited County owned land for consideration of disposal options – initial research to adjacent land owner partnerships is not promising. South Coast also has limited County owned land available and presently is under design for final closure; thus, alternate leachate options could be addressed separately along with post closure work. Caspar is co-owned with the City of Fort Bragg. A separate agreement for work is needed to account for accurate project costs which are shared 50%-50%. For this reason MCDOT is recommending separate agreements for feasibility type studies be considered and set up as separate contracts for Caspar, Laytonville and South Coast; although selection of a common consultant through a common RFP process is advantageous.
- 2) MCDOT believes that the potential cost savings are higher at Caspar because the pollutant levels are very low and more easily treatable. Furthermore, the volume of leachate is high and subsequently the cost of disposal offers the potential for significant cost recovery of a new treatment system capital investment.
- 3) Caspar is co-owned with the City of Fort Bragg. Pursuant to the City/County Joint Powers Agreement, MCDOT discussed the issue with the Joint Coordinating Committee (JCC) on March 14, 2012. MCDOT's interpretation of the JCC recommendation was before issuing an RFP and hiring a consultant to do extensive studies (expending significant funds), that an effort on a fatal flaws study done by County and City staff to the greatest extent possible which would not exceed \$5,000 in cost. The City offered that their staff could do the work with the permitting agency (North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board –

NCRWQCB) on discharge requirement modifications while County Environmental Health could compile record data on leachfield percolation capacity for area soils. The \$5,000 could compensate staff and possibly cursory efforts by consultants. After the fatal flaws analysis was done the City/County could decide on a more rigorous and specific effort towards modifying leachate disposal at Caspar.

- 4) Possible options for modifications to the Caspar Leachate Disposal could include some or all of the following – prioritized least to best, based very preliminary implementation and operation cost estimates in consideration and technical difficulty:
  - a) Continue to haul to local wastewater treatment plant.
  - b) Divert haul to more distant wastewater treatment plant.
  - c) Store and evaporate leachate – large drying bed.
  - d) Treat leachate and discharge to irrigation – short dry season on coast and containment issues with rainfall on spray field.
  - e) Treat leachate and discharge to leachfield – might impact land which is part of “land swap” for the new regional transfer station.
  - f) Treat leachate and discharge to storm drain – least costly but difficult to permit in consideration of downstream water bodies.

MCDOT takes no position on a phased approach to study modifying leachate disposal at Caspar. The Phase I - fatal flaws effort - will add time because staff, even if their time is reimbursed from the Landfill Closure Fund, has limited capacity for additional projects which must be worked into their schedule. However, the fatal flaws effort could save costs for consultant efforts if the options were deemed infeasible. Should the Board direct MCDOT to bypass a fatal flaws effort and go directly to “Request for Proposals” (RFP) for the subject work at the Caspar Landfill, County MCDOT staff will copy our partner agency at the City of Fort Bragg. MCDOT will invite the City and Mendocino Solid Waste Management Authority (MSWMA) General Manager, Mike Sweeney to participate in consultant selection. The consultant contract would come back to the Board of Supervisors at a public meeting for award where direction as to a phased approach could be considered. Costs are not known but because this effort if undertaken will occur in the 20012-13 Fiscal Year (FY 12-13) MCDOT will build \$ 60,000 into the proposed budget for these efforts so we can proceed if a worthwhile cost saving project is identified.

Pursuant to the Board’s direction, the Department will proceed with a Phase I fatal flaws analysis (alternate action) and/or advertise and distribute the Request for Proposal for design and permitting services (PE – PS&E phases) to modify the existing leachate disposal system to include some or all treatment and disposal on site verses hauling to a wastewater treatment plant (recommended action).

I will, of course, respond to any questions that the Board may have.

Respectfully submitted,

HOWARD N. DASHIELL  
Director of Transportation

cc: Mike Sweeney, General Manager,  
Mendocino Solid Waste Management Authority (MSWMA)  
Linda Ruffing, City Manager, City of Fort Bragg

BOS Corres. File