

Facility and Plan Review Subcommittee  
Los Angeles County Solid Waste Management Committee/  
Integrated Waste Management Task Force

**October 17, 2019**

Los Angeles County Public Works  
900 South Fremont Avenue  
Alhambra, CA 91803

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jason Aspell, South Coast Air Quality Management District  
Betsey Landis, Chair, Environmental Organization Representative  
Mike Mohajer, General Public Representative  
Shikari Nakagawa-Ota, County of Los Angeles Department of Public Health  
Carlos Ruiz, Los Angeles County Public Works  
Sam Shammas, County Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS NOT PRESENT:

Reyna Pereira, City of Los Angeles

OTHERS PRESENT:

Martins Aiyetiwa, Los Angeles County Public Works  
Maria Carlson, Los Angeles County Public Works  
Brenda Eels, Jacobs Engineering Group, Inc.  
Gabriel Esparza, Los Angeles County Public Works  
Michael Harmon, Los Angeles County Public Works  
Wayde Hunter, North Valley Coalition of Concerned Citizens  
Margarita Quiroz, Los Angeles County Public Works  
Vu Truong, Los Angeles County Public Works  
Daniel Wibisono, Los Angeles County Public Works  
Omid Mazdidasni, Los Angeles County Public Works  
Aric Rodriguez, Los Angeles County Public Works

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Ms. Landis called the meeting to order at 11:09 a.m.

**II. APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 19, 2019 MEETING MINUTES**

A motion to approve the Minutes from the September 19, 2019, Subcommittee Meeting, as corrected, was made by Ms. Landis and seconded by Mr. Ruiz. Motion passed unanimously.

**III. UPDATE ON SUNSHINE CANYON CITY/COUNTY LANDFILL**

Odor Complaints

Mr. Truong provided an update on the (SCL) odor complaints from the South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD) for the month of September 2019 ([Link](#)).

- During the month of September 2019, 95 complaints were made to the AQMD hotline. Of those, 28 were classified as either trash or landfill gas, 53 were classified as no odor detected, and the remaining 14 were listed as No Field Response.
- Between August 2019 and September 2019, the number of complaints received increased from 7 to 95 complaints.
- Compared to September of last year, the number of complaints this September increased from 33 to 95 complaints.
- The total number of complaints received this year is 238.
- As of October 9, 2019, AQMD has issued one Odor Complaint Notice of Violation (NOV) to SCL for the month of September 2019. The NOV was issued for odor complaint (trash) received during the period from 6:44 a.m. to 7:37 a.m. on September 13, 2019.

Ms. Landis commented there may be many complaints in October. She asked if staff received any report on damage to SCL due to the Saddleridge Fire (Fire). Mr. Harmon responded there will be an update following the Perimeter Monitoring Well update.

Perimeter Monitoring Well 205R Update

Mr. Harmon provided an update on Perimeter Monitoring Well 205R.

Staff received the SCL Solid Waste Facility Permit Monthly Local Enforcement Agency (LEA) report dated October 15, 2019, from Republic Services (Republic) for the month of September 2019. The Report provides the methane concentration reading for perimeter monitoring well 205R which was taken on September 26,

2019. The highest reading for this perimeter well was 2.4 percent methane CH<sub>4</sub> by volume and continues to be below the 5 percent methane CH<sub>4</sub> limit. Staff will continue to monitor the monitoring well methane probe readings.

At the last meeting, the Subcommittee passed a motion for the Task Force to send a letter to Republic regarding ownership information and well activity status of existing oil wells located within the Landfill's property. Mr. Harmon reported that staff was finalizing this letter and expected to send it to Republic by the end of the day.

There were no comments. Ms. Landis asked for update on fires.

#### Saddleridge Fire pertaining to SCL

Mr. Harmon also provided a brief summary of the status of the landfill as it pertained to the Fire. In the early morning hours of October 11, 2019, the Fire reached the SCL and impacted the site.

According to the information provided by Republic and the LEA, the Fire primarily impacted the closed portion of the City side of the Landfill, and except for landfill gas Flare 3, the remaining flares on the County portion at the Landfill and the Gas-to-Energy (GTE) facility were not significantly impacted and had largely resumed operation by Saturday, October 12, 2019, once power was restored.

Flare 1, located by the closed City portion of the Landfill, did not suffer any significant damage but lost communications. The closed City Landfill is on a separate gas collection network from the active Landfill.

Flare 3, located along the ridgeline on the County side and was serving the active Landfill, is currently offline. This Flare is expected to remain offline due to the Fire impact to the header line leading to the flare.

City Side Sage Mitigation Decks A and C sustained significant damage, portions of Deck B sustained damage as well. The County Sage Mitigation area sustained minor damage at vegetated portions.

The Landfill temporarily ceased Landfill operations due to the Fire but have since resumed Landfill operations as of Monday, October 14, 2019. The LEA did not restrict the Landfill from accepting solid waste on Monday since the LEA had determined that there were no safety issues impacting the site or its customers. Currently, the Landfill is working to restore all systems as quickly as possible.

The Landfill closed operations on Friday, October 11, 2019, and resumed operations on the following Monday morning, October 14, 2019. Mr. Ruiz commented that power had been restored using emergency portable generators.

The Landfill requested a special permit (variance) from AQMD to continue to operate the generators until the powerlines are restored. Ms. Landis commented that she was glad they had generators on-site prior to the incident. Mr. Ruiz stated that they were able to restore power within a day and that LEA personnel was allowed to access the site to assess damage. He reiterated that the closed City portion of the Landfill suffered the most damage and that the well heads and header lines will take time to restore. Mr. Ruiz stated that on the active portion of Landfill at the gas and energy facility, all turbines were operating except for one. He continued that gas generated from of the active Landfill is being handled through the GTE facility and remaining three gas flares. According to the LEA, as of two days ago, they were already handling 75 percent of the gas.

Ms. Landis asked if any of the alternative covers were burned. Mr. Ruiz responded that the area impacted by the Fire was on the ridgeline and surrounding landscape and not the active part of the Landfill. Ms. Landis requested that staff investigate if any alternative covers at the Landfill were affected by the Fire.

Mr. Mohajer mentioned that Dave Thompson has been at the Landfill since last Friday and the LEA has been very involved. Mr. Hunter stated that over the weekend, SCL filed for an emergency variance that was granted by AQMD Hearing Board on October 16, 2019. This allows Republic to operate portable generators continuously in violation of Rule 1150.1 and requires Republic to mitigate emissions where they can. It does not allow exemption for any nuisance, Rule 402, so they will still be accountable during the emergency period as they repair the facility's gas collection system and associated equipment. There are two more hearings scheduled for October 23 and 29, 2019, which are Public Hearings. Mr. Mohajer stated the hearings by the AQMD Hearing Board are a continuation and; therefore, will have the same case number. Discussion ensued.

Ms. Landis commented that different agencies perform their own assessments of what has been damaged. She requested staff to compile any reports on the incident and emergency actions to serve as a legacy case study of landfill emergency response. She asked if a motion was needed from the Subcommittee. Mr. Ruiz responded no motion was needed because staff will be instructed to follow-up and compile.

Mr. Hunter commented that odors have been reported prior to and following the incident. Mr. Hunter continued with his concerns with the gases, odors, and prevailing winds in regard to the Landfill in conjunction with the total devastation in the community from the Fire. Mr. Hunter also commented that AQMD's variances are generic and do not provide an assessment of the damage or reconstruction schedule. Ms. Landis asked Mr. Aspell, representing AQMD, to verify Mr. Hunter's comment. Mr. Aspell responded that within a week Republic is to provide AQMD

with a project schedule and a follow-up hearing will occur after the Emergency Hearing. Discussion ensued.

Ms. Landis inquired about which agency has authority to cease operations during this type of incident. Mr. Ruiz stated that in the case of the Fire, the Fire Department would have the authority to stop operations during a wildfire and decide when they could reopen. The LEA has authority to halt operations if there are high winds events and landfill fires. In this case, the Landfill operator evacuated and made the decision to not reopen on Friday. They voluntarily stopped operations and it is his understanding that the LEA did not object to reopening on Monday because they did not see any safety issues with the operations. The active area and roads were largely unaffected.

Ms. Nakagawa-Ota stated that an LEA Program Manager, Dave Thompson, has been in contact with her since Friday and has been providing updates to LEA, Public Works, and CalRecycle. She reiterated that Republic closed their operations voluntarily. They did an assessment to try and find out what needs repairing. After the assessment, they were able to find out if it was feasible to resume operation. Because there was compliance with the joint technical documents, they resumed operation on Monday, October 14, 2019. Ms. Landis concurred that the LEA is the Lead Enforcement Agency and can make that decision. Mr. Mohajer explained that SCL and any other landfill within the County of Los Angeles operates under the control of several regulatory agencies, one of which is the LEA. However, the LEA has its own authority which is not the authority of the County Board of Supervisors, the AQMD, or the Water Board. Mr. Mohajer explained that Mr. Hunter's concern with SCL is that they should have received clearance from all regulatory agencies that they operate under before opening operation. Mr. Mohajer stated that Republic is responsible for checking with all regulatory agencies. Mr. Mohajer added the reason for the report requested is to clarify procedure and needing an emergency response plan to mitigate confusion and clarify responsibility. Mr. Mohajer asked that staff speak to Republic to find out what the site emergency plan is and what it entails.

Ms. Landis asked if anybody from Public Works has been to the Landfill. Mr. Aiyetiwa responded that staff intends to survey damage to the gas control system. Mr. Ruiz commented that even though Public Works has not been at the site, they have been in communication with the operator and the LEA.

Mr. Hunter requested to see a timeline of what approvals and actions were done, when the Fire was started, and when they reopened. Mr. Aspell expressed to Mr. Hunter that he would have his chance for public comment at the hearing about timelines and variances. Mr. Aspell then asked Mr. Hunter to inform the community that he does not want any misunderstanding about a variance problem, public nuisance, and odors. He wants the community to continue to call in if they detect

odors and that the AQMD will be vigilant during this time in responding to complaints in the area.

Ms. Nakagawa-Ota noted that SCL and LEA had to be escorted to the site because of the road closures. However, the Program Manager was able to be escorted by first responders and the site manager to get to the site. LEA did their best to get to SCL and assist with the situation and operator. Ms. Nakagawa-Ota mentioned that the goal was for SCL to resume operation after taking the necessary assessment. The Program Manager kept Public Works and CalRecycle informed every day. Site personnel had engineers and technical expertise flown in from Republic's headquarters. Every person on that Landfill over the weekend did everything they could. Ms. Landis suggested perhaps getting first responders involved because the respective departments need to assess emergency situations quickly. Discussion regarding the Fire concluded.

#### **IV. UPDATE ON CHIQUITA CANYON LANDFILL**

##### Odor Complaints

Mr. Mazdidasni provided updates on odor complaints at Chiquita Canyon Landfill (CCL) for the month of September 2019.

- During the month of September 2019, AQMD issued 3 NOVs to CCL for odors.
- LEA issued 6 NOVs due to concentrations of methane gas exceeding 5 percent by volume, at a perimeter monitoring well. LEA sent NOVs in the months of May, June, July, August, and September.
- LEA required the operator to submit a Remediation plan. As a result, CCL submitted a Remediation Plan to LEA on July 19, 2019, which was approved on July 30, 2019.

Mr. Mohajer asked for copies of the NOVs and the location of the gas monitoring well.

Staff also reported that they reached out to AQMD for assistance in compiling and preparing odor complaint records for CCL, to report back to the Subcommittee.

##### Lawsuits

CCL filed a lawsuit challenging the NOV issued by Regional Planning on December 11, 2017. The trial is set for June 25, 2020.

The landfill operator filed a lawsuit on October 20, 2017, challenging 13 conditions of the Conditional Use Permit (CUP). The next hearing is scheduled for

November 12, 2019, and the trial on the CUP conditions will take place on April 23, 2020.

The Environmental and Community Groups filed a California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) lawsuit on August 24, 2017, alleging that the project Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was inadequate and not in compliance with the CEQA. The court issued a decision on October 10, 2019, in favor of the County and CCL. Ms. Landis asked if the EIR was sufficient. Mr. Ruiz responded that Public Works is trying to get the details from the decision, but the court has ruled in favor of the County and CCL, and a copy will be given to the Subcommittee once received. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Aspell expanded from AQMD's standpoint that from September 2 to September 13, 2019, AQMD received 45 complaints. They are working with staff to provide regular updates to the subcommittee. Mr. Mohajer asked if it was an environmental justice issue because the Val Verde community is not as vocal as the North Valley Coalition of Concerned Citizens. Ms. Landis stated that at the last Subcommittee meeting she asked staff to reach out to the Val Verde community and invite them to attend Subcommittee meetings. Mr. Ruiz responded that a letter had been sent to the CAC's Chair Person, but there has been no response. Mr. Mohajer asked if there was a way to verify that the letter was distributed to the CAC members. Mr. Ruiz commented that the way the Community Advisory Committee is set up, Regional Planning is staff to the advisory committee, and they are the point of contact. He believes the letter has been distributed, but staff will follow-up.

## **V. DISCUSSION OF FOC REPORTS**

### Conversion Technology

Mr. Wibisono provided an update from Republic and Waste Connections on efforts to promote Conversion Technologies (CT).

### SCL

Republic provided an update on July 30, 2019, that was included in the August Staff Report. On October 8, 2019, Republic responded to the Task Force's request with correspondences to document their efforts to support CT during the second quarter of 2019. In Republic's response, they indicated their support for the following bills:

- Republic Services focuses mainly on bio methane/Renewable Natural Gas and their co-sponsorship on Assembly Bill 1583, which encourages recycling of paper and organic waste by extending the California Alternative Energy and Advanced Transportation Financing Authority Sales and Use Tax Exclusion and Recycling Market Development Zone program until January 1, 2031.

- Republic is a member of the California Compost Coalition supporting Assembly Bill 144, which requires a scoping plan from the Strategic Growth Council to meet organic waste management mandates, goals, and targets by December 31, 2020.
- They support Assembly Bill 491 through their membership in the Coalition for Renewable Natural Gas. The bill requires the California Council on Science and Technology to study the impacts of increased hydrogen concentration on California's natural gas system.
- Republic is a member of the Coalition for Renewable Natural Gas supporting Senate Bill 457, which is a five-year extension for an existing incentive program for biomethane projects administered by the California Public Utilities Commission.
- Republic stated they support Senate Bill 667, which requires CalRecycle to develop a 5-year investment strategy to meet organic waste diversion and recycling targets, including providing loans and incentive payments to fund organic waste recycling infrastructure.

Mr. Mohajer requested to see written documentation of Republic's support of the legislation, similar to letters that the Task Force sends regarding their positions and sending to respective committees and authors. Secondly, Mr. Mohajer mentioned the CUP requirements to work toward establishing and moving the barriers with establishing CT facilities. In addition, Mr. Mohajer requested Republic's comments to CalRecycle on SB 1383, if there are any. This also includes Waste Management and Waste Connections.

#### CCL

Staff is preparing to send a letter to a representative from CCL welcoming them to attend the Alternative Technology Advisory Subcommittee meetings. Currently, Staff is working with Waste Connections to find a representative to invite.

#### Lancaster Landfill

Waste Management has not provided staff with an update.

## **VI. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

For the record, Mr. Hunter stated he realizes that Republic did not cause the Fire at the landfill. The landfill is suffering from the damages caused by the Fire. Republic had done works to improve the conditions at the landfill and now the Fire has destroyed or compromised what had been done.

Ms. Landis responded that is why the Subcommittee is requesting a report on how to handle such an emergency, since it can potentially happen again.

## **VII. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 12:21 p.m. The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, November 21, 2019, at 11:00 a.m., in Conference Room B of Public Works Headquarters.