

**From:** [harold wyatt](#)  
**To:** [Larry Micari](#)  
**Subject:** Fee increase  
**Date:** Tuesday, December 10, 2024 2:17:48 PM

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It would really be nice then if the supervisor stood up for the people and said no to their increase. This sounds very harsh but this needs to be done to help these folks out. I volunteer at the food pantry I see the hardship of these folks. Again thank you for your service you and listening to me. Hal Wyatt

**From:** [harold wyatt](#)  
**To:** [Larry Micari](#)  
**Subject:** Poor living conditions  
**Date:** Tuesday, December 10, 2024 1:39:31 PM

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I really enjoy your newsletter keeps me informed. I do have a big request I just received my notice from Waste Management and as you know they are asking for more money. Anybody on a fixed income or a low income a increase cost really hurts. This company has asked for a rate increase annually and they get it . Every dime a person can save can be spent on groceries living cost, rent and utilities.

So please talk to the other Board members and convince them we can't afford any more increases and turn Waste Management increase down. We are already with bags of household trash in the back yards and our ranch's. Thank you for attention to this matter. Hal Wyatt

**From:** [Larry Micari](#)  
**To:** [Melinda Benton](#); [Clerk of the Board](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Mid Valley Disposal Rate Hilke Request  
**Date:** Thursday, December 12, 2024 11:54:47 AM

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Please see attached comment. I replied and requested Jed to come to the meeting or provide a public comment.

Larry Micari  
Tulare County Board Of Supervisors District 1  
(559)636-5000 Office  
(559)799-3654 Cell

*Strength Through Service...*

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**From:** Jed Harrison <jedharrison@schuylercitrus.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 11, 2024 8:30 PM  
**To:** Larry Micari <lmicari@tularecounty.ca.gov>  
**Subject:** Mid Valley Disposal Rate Hilke Request

Dear Larry,

I'm writing to ask that you rein in the Mid Valley Disposal rate hike request that is to be discussed at a Board meeting on Tuesday, December 17.

I own a citrus ranch in Lemon Cove, and currently pay \$149.02/month for 1x weekly pickup of my 2 yard bin and 2x/month pickup of my recycling tote. The current cost includes 19% total increases since May of 2023. Now, Mid Valley is proposing that my monthly service should increase 31% to \$196.15/month effective April of 2025. If granted, this would represent a cumulative increases of 56% in 2 years! (\$125.19 prior to 2023 rate hike).

I understand that costs for just about everything increases; labor, fuel, equipment, etc. But a 31% increase? This, on top of 2 increases in the past 2 years, seems unreasonable. My income has certainly not increased by that percentage. What I am asking is that you and the other supervisors make Mid Valley demonstrate that their costs have increased over 50% in 2 years. These kinds of cost increases, especially for a monopoly business, make farming increasingly unsustainable.

As a side note, thank you Larry, for your visits to the Exeter Kiwanis club. I appreciate you updates and willingness to listen to your constituents!

Jed Harrison, Chief Fruit Officer  
Schuyler Citrus/Harrison Ranch  
(and immediate past president, Exeter Kiwanis Club)



(559) 827 2040

[jedharrison@schuylercitrus.com](mailto:jedharrison@schuylercitrus.com)

**From:** [Jed Harrison](#)  
**To:** [Clerk of the Board](#)  
**Subject:** Comments on Waste Hauler Rate Increase Request  
**Date:** Monday, December 16, 2024 12:17:28 PM  
**Attachments:** [3Fruit 125.jpg](#)

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Dear Board of Supervisors,

I understand extra costs involved in handling a separate waste stream for the disposal companies, mandated by SB1383. I also understand that yes, **aerobic** composting is better than anaerobic landfill decomposition. The trick is proper composting.

But making farms that compost on site, and homeowners that practice composting pay for a service that they don't/wont use is not fair. As a farmer, I already incur costs of shredding my tree prunings on site. Many homeowners practice composting for their home gardens, and have no use for a separate green waste bin. There should be an "opt out" for farms and residences that handle green waste on site through shredding and composting. The state should incentivize composting on site with rebates for shredders and composters as an alternative for Californians.

Jed Harrison, Orchardist  
Schuyler Citrus/Harrison Ranch  
Lemon Cove, CA



(559) 827 2040  
[jedharrison@schuylercitrus.com](mailto:jedharrison@schuylercitrus.com)

**From:** [Laile Di Silvestro](#)  
**To:** [Clerk of the Board](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment - December 17 2024 Agenda Item 5  
**Date:** Monday, December 16, 2024 12:48:35 PM

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**This Message Is From an External Sender**

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I received a notice from Mid Valley Disposal Thursday afternoon indicating the Board of Supervisors will hear the matter of Solid Waste Collection Rate Increases tomorrow morning at 9:30am (agenda item 5). The Rate Adjustment Calculation includes a voluntary 10% increase in residential Foothill Area automated rates for a single "Bear-Proof Can" with a \$12.00 charge for each additional can.

There are several issues with this proposal:

1. There was no community involvement. On July 9th, "Supervisor Vander Poel directed staff to bring an agenda item for all SRA residents to have bear cans for their waste." According to the Clerk of the Board, no agenda item was brought forward. Instead, according to Guillermo Hermoso at Tulare County Solid Waste, RMA simply instructed Solid Waste to include "Bear-Proof Cans" in the Rate Adjustment Calculation. Accordingly, Solid Waste purportedly contacted Mid Valley Disposal, who purportedly provided the proposed rates.

2. The solution does not meet community needs.

- The solution is not mandatory.
- There is no solution for STR and commercial customers. It is critically important that all the 1-6yd. metal curbside bins (including the so-called bear-proof bins) be removed, as a) they do not deter bears and b) they injure and kill bears.
- The solution is too expensive for residents who need multiple bear-resistant cans. Many of us will need a can for garbage and one for recycling, and those who put food waste in the organics can will need a third can. The proposal entails a 10% increase for one can, a 40% increase for two cans, and a 70% increase for three cans. During a call this morning, Mid Valley Disposal was unable to explain how they derived the rates, and it is uncertain that the rates take into account the volume discounts.
- The proposed rates purportedly do not take into account available grants.
- The solution does not include the critically-important education element.
- The solution does not include collaboration with the CSD, SEKI, and (potentially) SPC.
- It is unclear if or how the solution follows the best-practices proven effective in other communities. This morning, Mid Valley Disposal was unable to answer any of my questions regarding the manufacturer, model, features, and size of the cans. We need cans that have been proven effective against black bears and that automatically lock and unlock when tipped into a garbage truck.
- There is no provision to fine people who over-fill their cans or fail to use the bear-resistant containers.

As you know, there has been a devastating loss of bear habitat in recent years due to fires and fire mitigation strategies (including prescribed burns and ground cover removal). At the same time, we have seen a substantial increase in the number of STRs, which have challenges

managing their garbage effectively. As a result, bear-strewn trash has become commonplace, and there are reports of adverse human-bear interactions. If we do not solve this problem immediately, we are likely to find ourselves in an untenable situation like the one Lake Tahoe residents are currently in.

Kind regards,

Laile Di Silvestro (Three Rivers)

**L. Laile Di Silvestro, M.A., RPA 18176**

Historical Archaeologist

Mobile: 1.425.444.2805

Email: [laile@mindspring.com](mailto:laile@mindspring.com)

**From:** [Leah Launey](#)  
**To:** [Clerk of the Board](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment - December 17 2024 Agenda Item 5  
**Date:** Monday, December 16, 2024 3:09:59 PM

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**This Message Is From an Untrusted Sender**

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From Leah Launey and Peter Sodhy, 42490 Kaweah River Drive, Three Rivers, CA 93271, 559-56-14270

1. There was no community involvement. On July 9th, "Supervisor Vander Poel directed staff to bring an agenda item for all SRA residents to have bear cans for their waste." According to the Clerk of the Board, no agenda item has been brought forward yet. According to Guillermo Hermoso at Tulare County Solid Waste, RMA instructed Solid Waste to include "Bear-Proof Cans" in the Rate Adjustment Calculation. Accordingly, Solid Waste purportedly contacted Mid Valley Disposal, who purportedly provided the proposed rates.

2. The solution does not meet needs previously articulated by members of the community.

- The solution is not mandatory.
- There is no solution for STR and commercial customers. As many have observed, it is critically important that all the bear-accessible 1-6 yd. metal curbside bins/dumpsters (including Mid Valley's so-called bear-proof bins) be replaced, as a) they do not effectively deter bears and b) they have injured and killed bears.
- The solution is expensive for residents who need multiple bear-resistant cans. Many of us will need a can for garbage and one for recycling, and those who put food waste in the organics can will need a third can. The proposal entails a 10% increase for one can, a 40% increase for two cans, and a 70% increase for three cans. During a call this morning, Mid Valley Disposal was unable to explain how they derived the rates, and it is uncertain that the rates take into account volume discounts.
- The proposed rates purportedly do not take into account available grants.
- The solution does not include the critically-important education element.
- The solution does not include collaboration with the Community Services District, Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, and the Bureau of Land

## Management.

- It is unclear if or how the solution follows the best-practices proven effective in other communities. This morning, Mid Valley Disposal was unable to answer any questions regarding the manufacturer, model, features, and size of the cans. As many community members have noted, we need cans that have been proven effective against black bears and that automatically lock and unlock when tipped into a garbage truck.
- There is no provision to fine people who over-fill their cans or fail to use the bear-resistant containers.

**From:** [Bill / Marilyn](#)  
**To:** [Clerk of the Board](#)  
**Cc:** [Eddie Valero](#); [Amy Shuklian](#); [Larry Micari](#); [Dennis Townsend](#); [PeteVanderPoel@tularecounty.ca.gov](mailto:PeteVanderPoel@tularecounty.ca.gov)  
**Subject:** Public Comment - December 17 2024 Agenda Item 5"  
**Date:** Monday, December 16, 2024 2:45:59 PM

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**This Message Is From an Untrusted Sender**

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As a 46 year resident of Three Rivers I am seeing the success of Short Term Rentals, VRBOS and unsecured trash training our wildlife.

1. Mid Valley NEEDS to supply ( at their cost ) bear proof cans to ALL RESIDENTS .
2. ADD FINES TO non compliant and repeat offender who do not secure their trash. This current proposal does nothing to solve the problem and only costs the resident more money.  
Dumpsters are not the solution . They get flipped, bent, and pulled out into the narrow canyon roads.

I am in agreement with this written call to action and the many reasons that it is not going to work.

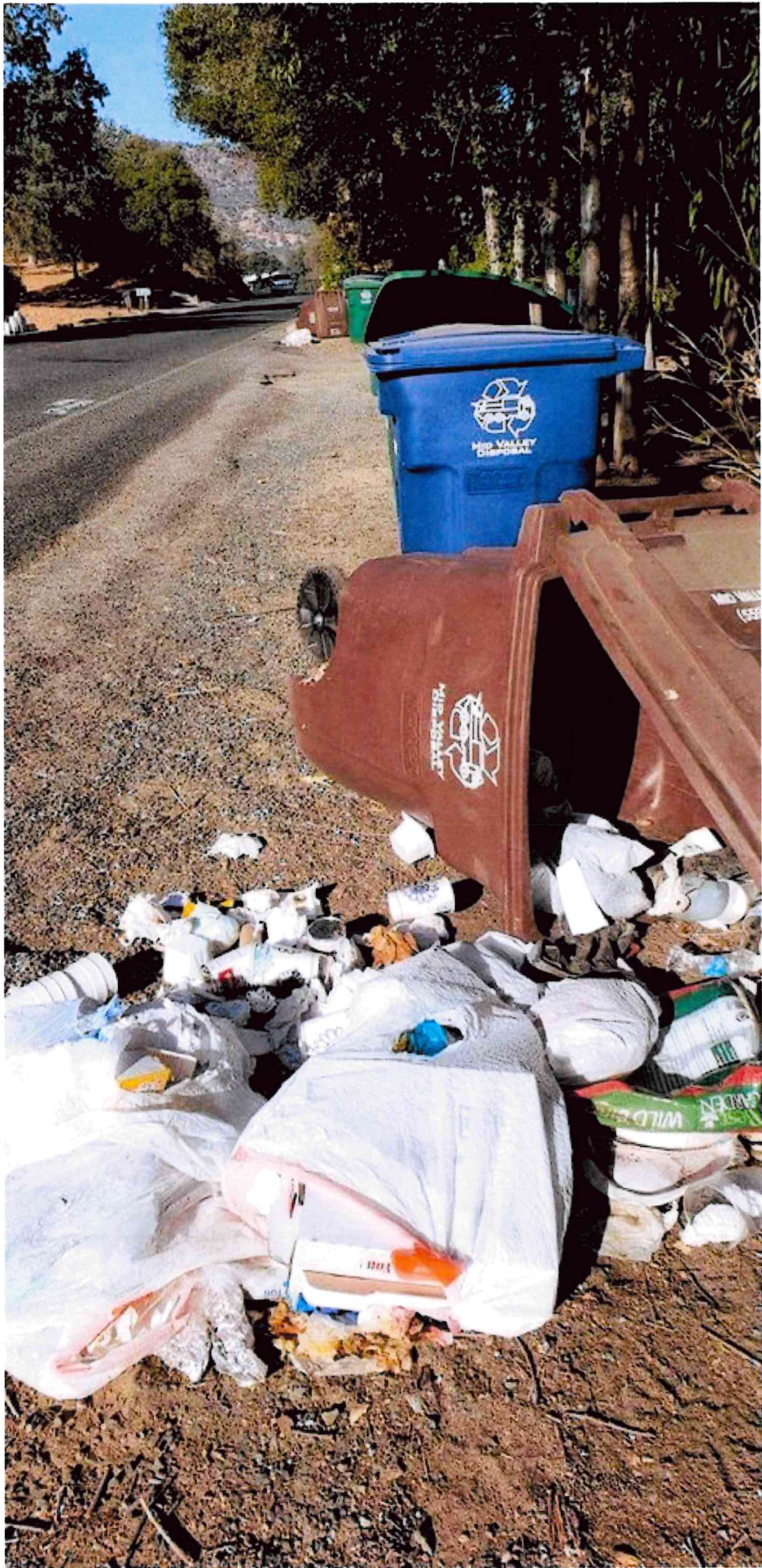
Potential issues that have been mentioned include the following:

1. There was no community involvement. On July 9th, "Supervisor Vander Poel directed staff to bring an agenda item for all SRA residents to have bear cans for their waste." According to the Clerk of the Board, no agenda item has been brought forward yet. According to Guillermo Hermoso at Tulare County Solid Waste, RMA instructed Solid Waste to include "Bear-Proof Cans" in the Rate Adjustment Calculation. Accordingly, Solid Waste purportedly contacted Mid Valley Disposal, who purportedly provided the proposed rates.
2. The solution does not meet needs previously articulated by members of the community.
  - The solution is not mandatory.
  - There is no solution for STR and commercial customers. As many have observed, it is critically important that all the bear-accessible 1-6 yd. metal curbside bins/dumpsters (including Mid Valley's so-called bear-proof bins) be replaced, as a) they do not effectively deter bears and b) they have injured and killed bears.
  - The solution is expensive for residents who need multiple bear-resistant cans.

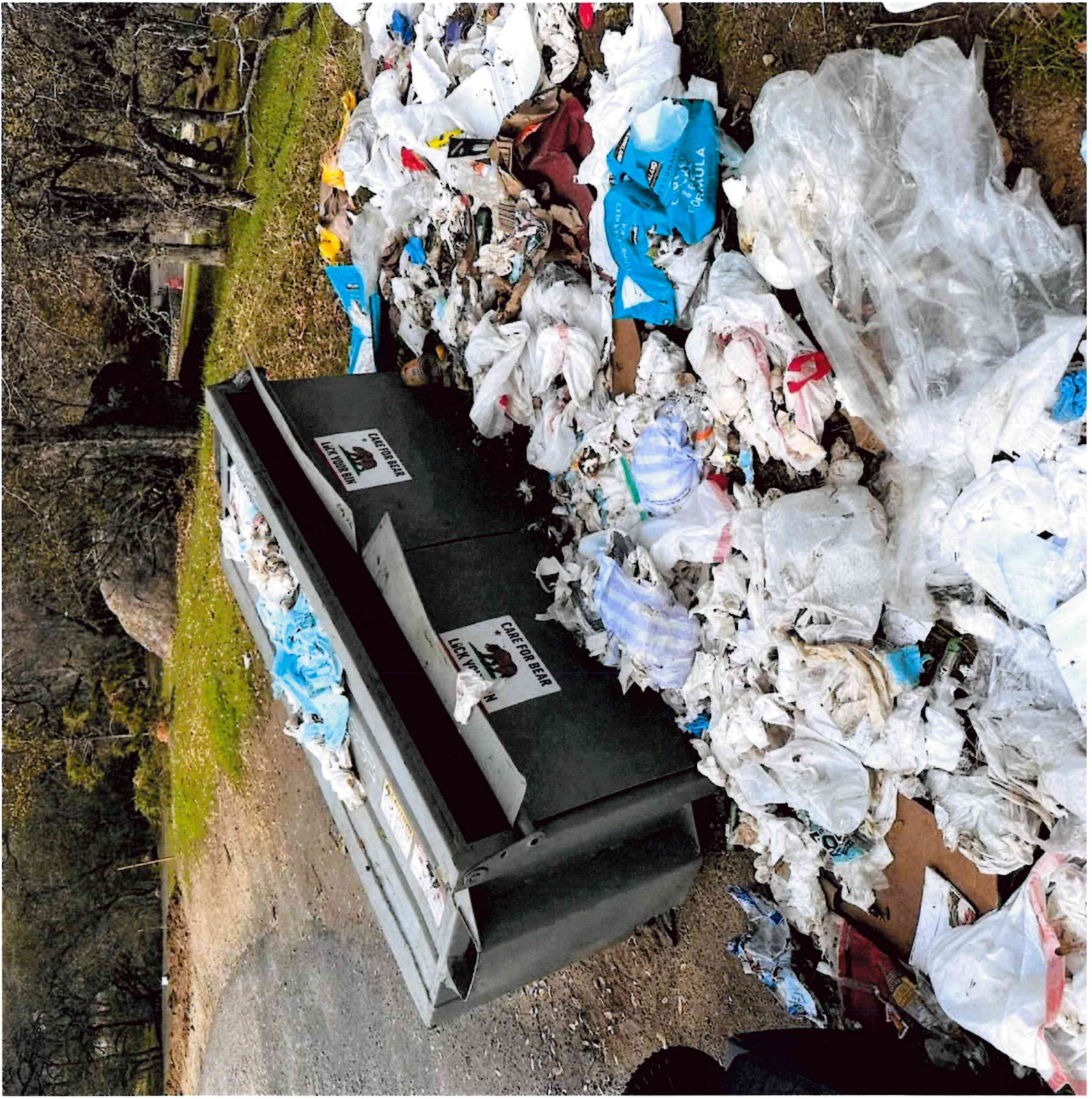
Many of us will need a can for garbage and one for recycling, and those who put food waste in the organics can will need a third can. The proposal entails a 10% increase for one can, a 40% increase for two cans, and a 70% increase for three cans. During a call this morning, Mid Valley Disposal was unable to explain how they derived the rates, and it is uncertain that the rates take into account volume discounts.

- The proposed rates purportedly do not take into account available grants.
- The solution does not include the critically-important education element.
- The solution does not include collaboration with the Community Services District, Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, and the Bureau of Land Management.
- It is unclear if or how the solution follows the best-practices proven effective in other communities. This morning, Mid Valley Disposal was unable to answer any questions regarding the manufacturer, model, features, and size of the cans. As many community members have noted, we need cans that have been proven effective against black bears and that automatically lock and unlock when tipped into a garbage truck.
- There is no provision to fine people who over-fill their cans or fail to use the bear-resistant containers.

Sincerely  
Marilyn Messa  
Three Rivers.







**From:** [Sarah Shena](#)  
**To:** [Clerk of the Board](#); [Eddie Valero](#)  
**Cc:** [Ken A. Elias](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment, 12/17/24 Agenda Item 5  
**Date:** Monday, December 16, 2024 2:44:22 PM

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**This Message Is From an Untrusted Sender**

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Honorable Supervisors:

As usual, Mid Valley's proposed rate increases (and especially the rates proposed for bear-resistant containers for residential Foothill Areas customers) completely exclude community involvement and education.

It is my understanding that in early July Supervisor Vander Poel directed staff to bring an agenda item for all SRA residents to have bear cans for their waste. According to the Clerk of the Board, that has never happened.

Apparently Guillermo Hermoso at Tulare County Solid Waste says RMA instructed Solid Waste to include "Bear-Proof Cans" in the Rate Adjustment Calculation. Solid Waste purportedly contacted Mid Valley Disposal, who purportedly provided the proposed rates.

All of that circumvents community input, including a full airing by way of an agenda item, as originally requested by the Board.

2. The proposed "solution" does not meet needs previously articulated by members of the community.

- Compliance is optional rather than mandatory.
- There is a complete lack of solutions directed at 1) Short Term Rentals (those homes are really more commercial than residential) and 2) commercial customers. As many have observed, it is critically important that all the bear-accessible 1-6 yd. metal curbside bins/dumpsters (including Mid Valley's so-called bear-proof bins) be replaced, as a) they do not effectively deter bears and b) they have **injured and killed bears**.
- The proposal is very expensive for those who need multiple bear-

resistant cans. Many of us need bear-proof cans for garbage, and for recycling, and we who put food waste in the organics can will need a third can. The proposal entails a 10% increase for one can, a 40% increase for two cans, and a 70% increase for three cans. During a call this morning, Mid Valley Disposal was unable to explain how they derived the rates, and it is uncertain that the rates take into account volume discounts (more than one at a single residence).

- The proposed rates purportedly do not take into account available grants.
- Unsurprisingly, the "solution" does not include the critically-important education element. The community (and its visitors, and newcomers as they arrive) must be given (and have easy access to on the Mid Valley website) explanations -- why bear-proofing matters, what's at stake, etc.
- I say unsurprisingly because I have repeatedly asked Mid Valley to tell the community (in a form more direct and interactive than an abbreviated insert with the bills) how we could do better at recycling. I have never received a response.
- Collaboration with crucial stakeholders (e.g., Community Services District, Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, and the Bureau of Land Management) is entirely absent from this approach.
- It is unclear if or how the proposed "solution" follows the best-practices proven effective in other communities. This wheel does not have to be reinvented (and customers should not have to pay for a method that is experimental rather than proven). This morning, Mid Valley Disposal was unable to answer any questions regarding the manufacturer, model, features, and size of the cans they are proposing a surcharge for.

We need cans that have been proven effective against black bears and that automatically lock and unlock when tipped into a garbage truck.

This approach also lacks a provision to fine people who over-fill their cans or fail to use the bear-resistant containers.

Because of where I live I won't be at the meeting in person (as I have been in the past for Mid Valley rate increase agenda items). Please take the pleas of our residents seriously.

Sincerely,

Sarah Shena  
& Ken Elias

*She/her/hers*

I support the Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival.

"As long as you keep a person down, some part of you has to be down there to hold him down, so it means you cannot soar as you otherwise might." - Marian Anderson

"...justice is what love looks like in public." - Cornel West

**From:** [Julie Gray](#)  
**To:** [Clerk of the Board](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment - December 17 2024 Agenda Item 5  
**Date:** Tuesday, December 17, 2024 6:29:22 AM

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**This Message Is From an Untrusted Sender**

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To whom it may concern,

Please address the ongoing bear/trash access problem in the foothills in a meaningful way. The foothills communities (Three Rivers in particular) need reliable, high quality, reasonably priced, bear-proof trash receptacles. Not only is the trash unsightly and unsanitary, it is unhealthy for the local bears who come to depend on unsecured trash as a food source.

Every trash day there are upturned bins - the owners of the homes (yes, many are out of area vacation rental owners) need to be fined for repeated violations or they will not comply.

It is crucial for our wildlife for this problem to be taken seriously.

Thank you for your consideration and action.

Best regards,

Julie Gray  
Three Rivers

Sent from my iPad

**From:** [Bettina Birch](#)  
**To:** [Clerk of the Board](#)  
**Subject:** December 17 2024 Agenda Item 5" in the subject line.  
**Date:** Tuesday, December 17, 2024 5:59:12 AM

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**This Message Is From an Untrusted Sender**

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Good morning:

As a 32 year resident of Three Rivers I am concerned about the quality of life of our community.

Following are my concerns:

1. There was no community involvement. On July 9th, "Supervisor Vander Poel directed staff to bring an agenda item for all SRA residents to have bear cans for their waste." According to the Clerk of the Board, no agenda item has been brought forward yet. According to Guillermo Hermoso at Tulare County Solid Waste, RMA instructed Solid Waste to include "Bear-Proof Cans" in the Rate Adjustment Calculation. Accordingly, Solid Waste purportedly contacted Mid Valley Disposal, who purportedly provided the proposed rates.

2. The solution does not meet needs previously articulated by members of the community.

- The solution is not mandatory.
- There is no solution for STR and commercial customers. As many have observed, it is critically important that all the bear-accessible 1-6yd. metal curbside bins/dumpsters (including Mid Valley's so-called bear-proof bins) be replaced, as a) they do not effectively deter bears and b) they have injured and killed bears.
- The solution is expensive for residents who need multiple bear-resistant cans. Many of us will need a can for garbage and one for recycling, and those who put food waste in the organics can will need a third can. The proposal entails a 10% increase for one can, a 40% increase for two cans, and a 70% increase for three cans. During a call this morning, Mid Valley Disposal was unable to explain how they derived the rates, and it is uncertain that the rates take into account volume discounts.
- The proposed rates purportedly do not take into account available grants.
- The solution does not include the critically-important education element.
- The solution does not include collaboration with the Community Services District, Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, and the Bureau of Land Management.
- It is unclear if or how the solution follows the best-practices proven effective in other communities. This morning, Mid Valley Disposal was unable to answer any questions regarding the manufacturer, model, features, and size of the cans. As many community members have noted, we need cans that have been proven effective against black bears and that automatically lock and unlock when tipped into a garbage truck.
- There is no provision to fine people who over-fill their cans or fail to use the bear-resistant containers.

Thank you.

Kind regards

Bettina Birch

**From:** [Laurie Schwaller](#)  
**To:** [Clerk of the Board](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment on December 17 2024 Agenda Item 5-Request from Solid Waste Department to approve . . .  
rates . . . effective April 1, 2025  
**Date:** Monday, December 16, 2024 9:48:47 PM  
**Attachments:** [Comments on BoS Agenda Item 5 121724.docx](#)

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**This Message Is From an External Sender**

This message came from outside your organization.

Please include our attached comments on Item 5 on the December 17, 2024, Agenda in the Board's packet for tomorrow's meeting.

Thank you!

And wishing you very Happy Holidays.

-- Greg and Laurie Schwaller  
43857 South Fork Dr.  
Three Rivers, CA 93271  
559-561-0111

TO: Tulare County Board of Supervisors

FR: Greg and Laurie Schwaller, 43857 South Fork Dr., Three Rivers, CA 93271

RE: December 17 2024 Agenda Item #5 - Solid Waste Department Request to Approve Franchise Hauler's Maximum Collection and Ancillary Rates Effective 4/1/2025 in Foothill Areas

Dear Supervisors:

Item 5 on this Agenda asks you to approve Franchise Hauler's maximum collection and ancillary rates per Exhibit B, effective April 1, 2025. The attached Exhibit shows in the Rate Adjustment Calculation for Residential in Foothill Areas and for Residential Ancillary Fees in All Areas an additional line item regarding Bear-Proof Cans.

For residences in the Foothill Areas, which would include all Three Rivers residences: "Bear-Proof Can (additional monthly surcharge) 10%." For Residential Ancillary Fees (All Areas): "Bear-Proof Can (additional monthly per Cart) \$12.00."

**1. We strongly urge you to NOT approve these monthly charges for Bear-Proof Cans at this time for the following reasons.** While on July 9, 2024, Supervisor Vander Poel directed staff to bring an agenda item for all SRA residents to have bear cans for their waste, we are not aware of such an item having appeared on a subsequent Board agenda, or of staff or Supervisors having communicated with the affected communities re the contents of such an item. Certainly, the Board is aware of the Three Rivers community's concerns about problems with bears and trash and the need for solutions to the problems, but surely this monthly charge for bear-proof cans can't be the Board's undiscussed, unexplained solution.

2. This monthly rate would be a hefty annual cost for many residents, especially those who are already paying for three separate cans to encourage recycling, but there has been no community outreach and involvement to explain the specifications on these cans that would ensure that they would be bear-proof and there is nothing to indicate that use of the bear-proof cans would be mandatory, so who is going to pay extra for these cans? OR must the additional monthly charge be paid by residents regardless of whether or not they want these "bear-proof" cans, or how many of them they want for their household.

3. The Commercial rates for the Foothills and elsewhere show NO additional monthly surcharge for bear-proof cans. Why would only residences be required to pay the additional charges? Are commercial sites not going to be required to use bear-proof containers? Are the Short Term Rental businesses (probably a chief source of bear/trash problems in Three Rivers) going to be considered as residences or as commercial establishments for purposes of these additional charges?

4. **Please direct staff to prepare a clear, detailed plan for the implementation of bear-proof cans in Foothill communities.** Plan preparation must include community input and feedback; specifications based on documented successful bear-proofing; procedures based on proven best practices in communities with similar bear/trash problem; whether the bear-proof cans will be mandatory for all trash/refuse or only some; how the community will be educated regarding the requirement for use of the bear-proof cans; how use, misuse, or failure to use will be monitored; and what penalties will be enforced for misuse or failure to use as required. (Are grants available to help with this process and the plan's implementation and ongoing costs to residents?)

5. **Please engage the Three Rivers community** in at least one initial public meeting, with open opportunities for follow-up, so that the community's experiences and needs can be fully understood and staff's planning can be shown to meet these needs. As the southern gateway to Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, Three Rivers is home to abundant wildlife, including numerous hungry bears, especially at certain times of the year, and is also home to hundreds of short-term rentals, most of whose clients and many of whose managers seem either ignorant of or unconcerned about how their trash mis-handling can cause many problems for bears and for their neighbors.

Thank you for considering these requests and urgings and for providing a solid, effective, and cost-effective plan for solving these long-term, on-going bear/trash problems. We look forward to working with you on this plan and its implementation.

Wishing you happy holidays and a happy new year,

Laurie and Greg Schwaller

The Exhibits attached to Item 5 include form letters from Waste Haulers addressed to their customers notifying them of the hearing on December 17, 2024, regarding Solid Waste Collection Rate Increases due to changes in State and Federal laws and other factors related to rising costs, and stating that they will ask the Supervisors to approve the rate increases based on the new organics waste diversion requirements as mandated by SB1383.

Mid Valley Disposal is the hauler for Three Rivers. Their letter in the Exhibit shows a date of December 3, 2024. We did not receive this letter. The letter does not mention the Bear-Proof Cans or how they are required by SB1383.

**From:** [Laura Bullene Jacobo](#)  
**To:** [Clerk of the Board](#)  
**Subject:** Bear proof trash cans in 3R  
**Date:** Monday, December 16, 2024 8:31:22 PM

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**This Message Is From an Untrusted Sender**

You have not previously corresponded with this sender.

Please consider allowing residents to purchase these proven bear proof garbage containers for MidValley to pick up. The dimensions are the same although MidValley had told me numerous times they will not empty them.

This is just one option, they have numerous to choose from. Lake Tahoe uses them

<https://bearicuda.com/stealth-bear-resistant-can/>

This is a serious issue that MV cannot handle.

Laura Bullene  
Heidi Rd, 3R

**From:** [Autumn P Davidson](#)  
**To:** [Clerk of the Board](#)  
**Subject:** "Public Comment - December 17 2024 Agenda Item 5"  
**Date:** Monday, December 16, 2024 6:05:10 PM  
**Importance:** High

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**This Message Is From an External Sender**

This message came from outside your organization.

Dear Supervisors,

Please realize that pricing bear resistant trash containers so high that property owners, especially absentee owners, will not use them, and the trash strewn about by bears will not be reduced. Injury to humans and bears is likely. Please resolve this issue by providing affordable and effective bear proof containers at a reasonable price and making their use mandatory where bear problems are occurring.

Autumn Davidson DVM, MS, DACVIM, ACT(hon)  
Clinical Veterinarian Internal Medicine Service  
Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital  
School of Veterinary Medicine  
University of California, Davis  
Resident Three Rivers

**From:** [Sarah Elliott](#)  
**To:** [Clerk of the Board](#)  
**Subject:** PUBLIC COMMENT - December 17, 2024, Agenda Item #5  
**Date:** Monday, December 16, 2024 5:58:45 PM  
**Attachments:** [12172024 Agenda Item 5.pdf](#)

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**This Message Is From an Untrusted Sender**

You have not previously corresponded with this sender.

Hello...

Thank you for forwarding the attached pdf document in regard to the above agenda item to the Board of Supervisors for review.

Sincerely,

Sarah Elliott  
Three Rivers, Calif.

December 16, 2024

Re: Public Comment - December 17, 2024, Agenda Item 5

Dear Tulare County Board of Supervisors,

In the fall of 2025, it will mark 10 years since I began actively working toward bear-proofing Three Rivers. From traveling to the far reaches of this rural community to retrofit Mid Valley's plastic trash cans with bear-deterrent hardware to providing education and resources on how to coexist with bears as the editor of the Three Rivers weekly newspaper, I have tirelessly advocated for keeping human garbage away from bears — for the safety of both residents and wildlife.

Back in 2015, I was informed by the then-county supervisor that Mid Valley Disposal was “under a long-term contract” and that no changes could or would be made by either the County of Tulare or the solid waste contractor. Fast forward to now: with only three working days' notice, Three Rivers residents were informed that a new contract with Mid Valley Disposal that reflects across-the-board price increases was going before the Board of Supervisors, presumably for a rubber-stamp approval.

The lack of transparency in this decision is deeply concerning, particularly as the contract is now being extended to 2039. Does this mean the contract will never again be open for competitive bidding? Will there ever be an opportunity to choose a solid waste company that prioritizes addressing the unique challenges our community faces, such as the pressing issue of human-bear conflicts?

I urge you to table this contract and its associated rate increases until Mid Valley Disposal and the County of Tulare commit to making bear-proofing Three Rivers a mandatory priority. This is not just an environmental concern—it's a public safety imperative.

The argument that dumpsters are a viable alternative is flawed. Bears have demonstrated their ability to breach dumpsters, which are not only unsightly but also pose significant safety risks. Placed near highways, these large receptacles are potential hazards. A bear could easily topple one onto the roadway, or a distracted driver could collide with a dumpster that's too close to the road — resulting in serious injuries or even fatalities. At the very least, and as an immediate measure, reflective tape should be added to all dumpsters to improve visibility and mitigate these dangers.

Three Rivers deserves better. We need a waste management solution that prioritizes safety, accountability, and sustainability. Bear-proof trash receptacles are a critical step in that direction, and the County of Tulare, along with Mid Valley Disposal, must take responsibility for implementing this solution.

I appreciate your attention to this matter and look forward to seeing meaningful action taken to protect both the residents and wildlife of Three Rivers.

Respectfully,

Sarah Elliott  
PO Box 728  
Three Rivers, CA 93271  
Ph. (559) 349-7980  
Email: sarah3r@gmail.com

**From:** [A.P. Fullerton](#)  
**To:** [Clerk of the Board](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment - December 17, 2024 Meeting  
**Date:** Monday, December 16, 2024 5:30:07 PM

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Hello. I am emailing as a homeowner in Three Rivers. It is really important that we require bear proof trash bins wherever bears are also living. Neither people nor bears are leaving. Bears getting into bins creates a mess. I know some neighbors are fearful of being outdoors. I also heard a neighbor make a joke about a bear skin rug. There is cost associated with bear proof bins, but they are a necessity of living near a park. The bins must be simple to use and also foolproof so bears know they cannot get into them whenever they see them.

Thank you,  
Ahtossa Fullerton

**From:** [Linda Mutch](#)  
**To:** [Clerk of the Board](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment - December 17 2024 Agenda Item 5  
**Date:** Tuesday, December 17, 2024 8:03:53 AM

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Dear Tulare County Board of Supervisors,

I am writing to express my concerns about the "bear-proof cans" included in the rate adjustment notice I have received from Tulare County Solid Waste. If this is the proposed solution to the foothills challenges with bears constantly getting into garbage containers, it falls far short of what is needed, and lacks community engagement and input, is potentially costly to customers, and does not even attempt to engage local partners, seek outside funds, or research what has worked well in other communities with similar issues.

I was at the July 9th Board of Supervisors meeting where Supervisor Vander Poel directed staff to bring an agenda item for all SRA residents for their waste. I have never seen that this agenda item has been brought forward nor has there been meaningful engagement with community foothill residents and local organizations most affected by this issue.

There are numerous needs that have been brought forward previously that have not been addressed by this proposed solution:

- Bear-proof garbage containers are not mandatory. They must be if communities are going to have effective resolution of this issue.
- Nothing was proposed to address the needs of short-term rentals (that have the most issues with preventing bears from getting garbage) or local businesses.
- It is unclear that any research was done to select trash containers that are actually bear-proof. The current metal bins and dumpsters do not work (bears are even breaking into ones that have the bar in place). And worse, they have also injured bears, and part of the goal here is to protect bears from harm as well as keep residents safe. What is the intended storage solution that is being proposed?
- The proposal is expensive, especially for those who may need multiple bear-resistant cans (for garbage, organics, and possibly even recycling).
- There appears to have not been an effort made to seek grants that could reduce the cost.
- There was no mention of collaboration with important local partners, some of whom have expertise in bear management and effective trash storage (especially Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, Sequoia National

Forest, the Bureau of Land Management, and the Community Services District).

- What about an education component - for both residents and those who come as tourists - addressing why bear-proof food storage is needed and how it must be done to be effective?
- There are no consequences when people overfill trash containers or do not correctly use those that are meant to be bear-proof. See the photo below of one of the supposed bearproof containers broken into by a bear on the Mineral King Road, despite the bar being in place.



Photo by: Allison Millner

Thank you for the opportunity to comment, and I look forward to the County engaging communities and other partners in a more effective solution.

Sincerely,

Linda Mutch, 43554 Skyline Drive, Three Rivers, CA 93271

**From:** [Larry Micari](#)  
**To:** [Clerk of the Board](#)  
**Subject:** Fw: Waste Management  
**Date:** Tuesday, December 17, 2024 8:54:30 AM

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Comment I received this morning

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**From:** John Van Hofwegen <vanhofcabs@icloud.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 17, 2024 6:53:19 AM  
**To:** Larry Micari <lmicari@tularecounty.ca.gov>  
**Subject:** Waste Management

**This Message Is From an Untrusted Sender**

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Hi Larry,  
My name is John Van Hofwegen and I live just southwest of Exeter  
18020 Ave 256. I've operated a small business manufacturing custom cabinets at this  
address for nearly 34 years. I operate here under the use of a special use permit  
granted by the county for which I'm grateful. We use a commercial dumpster from  
waste management as prescribed and it has worked really well over the years. My  
concern is that our rates, which are approved by the county, keep going up as often  
as twice a year! I totally understand how things go up like insurance and labor . This  
although is getting out of hand. We just got notice of the public meeting Dec 17 -  
yesterday. So my schedule doesn't allow me to get to the meeting on short notice.  
Also the letter doesn't give any reason whatsoever on why the rate is going up. If we  
At least we're given that it'd help us feel better about these rate hikes as you are  
approving them. Business people usually do. But not just getting constant rate hikes  
fired at us. For you as a supervisor this should be clear in your mind to communicate  
with the area of your district- you were elected to help your people be aware of what  
is happening. I believe you owe it to those who faithfully vote for you.  
Costs are rising I understand but we need at least some sort of explanation before  
rate hikes are initiated.  
Thx for your help  
John  
Sent from my iPhone