



Resource Management Agency

COUNTY OF TULARE AGENDA ITEM

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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District One

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AGENDA DATE: December 17, 2024

Public Hearing Required	Yes
Scheduled Public Hearing w/Clerk	Yes
Published Notice Required	Yes
Advertised Published Notice	Yes
Meet & Confer Required	N/A
Budget Transfer (Aud 308) attached	N/A
Personnel Resolution attached	N/A
Agreement(s) attached	N/A

CONTACT PERSON: Celeste Perez PHONE: (559) 624-7010

SUBJECT: Certify and adopt the Final Focused Subsequent Environmental Impact Report for the proposed Visalia Disposal Site and Biogas and Compost Facility

REQUEST(S):

That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Hold a public hearing at 9:30 a.m. or soon thereafter.
2. Certify the Focused Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (State Clearinghouse No. 2021020054), Findings of Fact, and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program as the correct level of environmental review for the proposed Visalia Disposal (Landfill) Site and Biogas and Compost Facility – Landfilling Operations Project, located at 8614 Avenue 328, Visalia, CA 93291.
3. Certify and adopt the Focused Subsequent Environmental Impact Report, Findings of Fact, and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program as being in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the State CEQA Guidelines for the Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970 pursuant to Sections 21158 and 21166 and Sections 15162 and 15178, respectively, for the proposed Visalia Disposal (Landfill) Site and Biogas and Compost Facility – Landfilling Operations Project.
4. Direct the Environmental Assessment Officer, or designee, to sign and file the Notice of Determination with the Clerk-Recorder and the appropriate state agency.

SUMMARY:

As required by SB1383, the County is designing and permitting a Compost Facility at the Visalia Disposal Site (Landfill) located at 8614 Ave. 328 Visalia, CA 93291. A Focused Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was prepared for the Visalia Landfill – Compost and Biomass Conversion Facility Project (State Clearinghouse No. 2021020054) and was

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adopted/certified by the Tulare County Board of Supervisors on September 27, 2022, via Resolution No. 2022-084.

The County is now seeking a new standalone permit for the proposed biomass conversion/composting facility. The Visalia Landfill is currently permitted to receive up to 2,000 tons per day (TPD) of solid waste and 900 vehicles per day. It is the County's desire to increase the landfill's overall daily solid waste tonnage and daily vehicle limit to avoid violating its current permit from exceeding both daily tonnage and vehicle limits by requesting a standalone permit (within the existing footprint of Visalia Landfill) for the biomass conversion/ composting facility and associated haul trucks that would transport biomaterial to be exclusively used for biomass conversion/composting purposes. Specifically, the project proposes to:

- Increase the Landfill's total daily permitted tonnage of solid waste to 3,000 TPD. The County proposes to increase its total daily landfill tonnage by diverting 1,000 TPD of daily organic waste material to be used for biomass conversion/composting and maintaining its 2,000 TPD of solid waste toward landfilling. It is anticipated that the composting component of the biomass conversion/composting facility would reach its planned maximum of 200,000 TPY over the course of 13 years and would be constructed in four phases of 50,000 TPY; and
- Increase the Landfill's daily permitted vehicles trips by 300 vehicles/day (haul trucks) to 1,200 total vehicles/day. The County's current permit allows a daily limit of 900 total vehicles/day (it currently averages approximately 600 vehicles/day). Allowing the additional 300 vehicles (haul trucks)/day would provide a comfortable margin from its current limit of 900 vehicles/day. The increase of 300 haul trucks/day would be incremental over a 13-year period to coincide with full build-out and operation of the biomass conversion/composting facility.

The proposed increases will not have an impact on the permitted capacity of the Landfill's solid waste materials; rather, the proposed increase is limited to organic material that will be utilized exclusively as feedstock for the biomass conversion/composting facility. By diverting compostable organic material (e.g., feedstock such as green waste, wood waste, and residential organics), the Landfill's total solid waste stream will decrease over time thereby complying with the objectives of SB 1383 to reduce methane emissions. This would ultimately result in up to 200,000 TPY of diverted organic waste thereby extending the lifespan of the Landfill to accommodate future solid waste that would not qualify as suitable feedstock for biomass conversion/ composting production.

As the project proposes only an increase in permitted throughput, it was determined that a Subsequent EIR (SEIR) would be the appropriate environmental document. The County, along with expert consultants' contribution in preparing technical studies, has completed the CEQA process and the matter requires adoption and certification of the Final Focused SEIR by the Board to satisfy CEQA requirements.

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The Focused SEIR (State Clearinghouse No. 2021020054) has been prepared by the Tulare County Resource Management Agency (RMA) in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Sections 15120 through 15131 and Sections 15161 regulating EIRs to I) evaluate the environmental consequences of the Project, II) to discuss alternatives to the proposed Project, and III) to propose mitigation measures that will offset, minimize, or avoid identified significant environmental impacts.

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15082, the NOP for the proposed Project was circulated for a 30-day comment period beginning on June 13, 2023, and ending July 13, 2023. A Scoping Meeting was held on June 29, 2023, during the NOP comment period at Tulare County RMA Conference Room D, at 5961 South Mooney Boulevard, Visalia, CA, to solicit input on the scope of the Focused SEIR. No Comments were received at the Scoping Meeting. The Notice of Availability (NOA) of the Draft Focused SEIR was published in the Sun-Gazette, a newspaper of general circulation, on December 27, 2023, indicating that a 45-day review period would begin on December 29, 2023, and end on February 12, 2024. Comments were received from the California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle), California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), and San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (Air District).

Standard biological, cultural, and tribal survey requirements and/or discovery mitigation measures are included in the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP). This project will require the purchase of emission reduction credits (ERCs) from the Air District as mitigation because emission thresholds are projected to be exceeded as determined by the (Air District) over time (See FEIR, MMRP).

Staff responded to comments received from CalRecycle, CDFW, Caltrans, and Air District within the requisite time. These responses are included as part of the Final Focused SEIR.

Local Enforcement Agency

The Tulare County Environmental Health Division (TCEHD) serves as the Local Enforcement Agency (LEA) for solid waste facilities within the County. Pursuant to Cal. Code Regs. Tit. 27, §§ 21660 and 21660.2, TCEHD as the LEA is holding this informational meeting to discuss the permit application with the public, allowing for questions and feedback.

FISCAL IMPACT/FINANCING:

This project was funded by the Solid Waste Enterprise Fund. There is no net cost to the General Fund.

LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY OF TULARE STRATEGIC BUSINESS PLAN:

This project will enhance the safety and security of the public and the County environment and meet compliance with SB1383 requirements and standards.

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ADMINISTRATIVE SIGN-OFF:

/s/ Aaron R. Bock

Aaron R. Bock, MCRP, JD, LEED AP
Assistant Director
Economic Development & Planning

/s/ Michael Washam

Michael Washam, A.C.E.
Associate Director

/s/ Reed Schenke

Reed Schenke, P.E.
Director

Cc: County Administrative Office

Attachment A – Executive Summary
Attachment B – Final EIR (Response to Comments, MMRP, Errata)
Attachment C – Findings of Fact
Attachment D – Notice of Determination
Attachment E – Hearing Notice