

Ramirez, Alice

From: Geoff Ellsworth <geoffellsworth@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, October 19, 2020 1:56 PM
To: publicworks; upvalleyrecycles
Subject: Re: Board Meeting for Upper Valley Waste Management Agency - October 19th, 2020 - Items 6. B

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October 19th, 2020

Board of Directors
Upper Valley Waste Management Agency
c/o County Administration Building
1195 Third Street
Napa, CA 94559

Re: Item 6. B on agenda for board meeting of October 19, 2020

To The Upper Valley Waste Management Agency:

I am St. Helena Mayor Geoff Ellsworth, speaking as an individual elected official with concerns regarding this permit and process I want on record. Concerns that have been put forth to me by constituents as well.

Concerns about a lack of competitive bidding even after a history of violations. Competitive bidding helps ensure the public is properly served by its' utilities. There has been no discussion regarding this in roughly 50 years, I believe considering recent history now is the time.

I have concerns regarding oversight, that radioactive material was allowed to remain on site for nearly a year. The delay suggests inadequacies in our oversight process. We need to be sure this cannot happen again here. As devastating as the recent Glass Fire was we should consider ourselves fortunate the radioactive material was moved before fire swept through. The proximity of earthquake faults bolsters the case that all protections need to be in place to protect human and environmental health along with personal and business interests of our community and investors.

I have continued concerns about a landfill with inherent fire and explosive risks situated in a high fire risk tier 2 /tier 3 area as identified on PG and E and Cal Fire maps. Concerns about a facility in a remote high wind canyon that processes highly flammable, explosive gases and adds fuel load with continued operation. There appear to be conflicting reports regarding the Glass Fire impacts that need to be clarified.

The landfill sits just 6 rural forested miles away from the town and population I was elected to represent, in close proximity to thousands of homes, residents and businesses that are invested here and priceless, including interests of California Governor Gavin Newsom and Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi.

In 2019 contaminated leachate from the landfill made its way into the Napa River, causing a month-long closure of river access. Toxic contamination to our waterways poses a danger to human health and environmental health. There are scores of pipes in the Napa River that directly irrigate our Napa Valley vineyards and grapes.

Contamination of the Napa River threatens the very product so many here have worked so hard to establish. The product for which the Napa Valley has become famous is primarily made of water. We must do all we can to protect this resource and our Napa Valley brand.

The Napa River is also the second largest freshwater inflow to the San Francisco Bay. Contamination of the river thus threatens not only human and environmental health and business interests, but residents and interests downstream in the wider Bay Area.

All landfills are prone to leakage and fire, perhaps that was not well understood in the mid 1960's when this landfill was first established, but science and deeper consideration make it clear no matter what measures are taken at the landfill, fire risk is inherent and leakage into the Napa River watershed will be a continued concern.

There is concern with the process and the recent approval for taking in wildfire debris, that appears to be a significant factor in the recent landfill violations. I have concerns about conflicts of interest and transparency in our oversight and regulatory process.

We are at a point in time when these issues need to be considered with examination of the JPA process and structure as well as a need for an Environmental Impact Report on any use permit, as well as consideration of phasing out the landfill at its current site. There have been points brought up about Vehicle Miles Traveled and costs if we were to consider moving the landfill, but without an open bidding process we are not fully vetting options.

While there may be a long term contract in place unforeseen and extraordinary circumstances may create a situation where re-evaluation is necessary.

Science and logic tell us it's time for a safer and more environmentally/community friendly solution to upper valley waste management.

Geoff Ellsworth