

**HAMILTON COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES  
SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT DISTRICT  
MANAGER'S MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** March 4, 2005

**TO:** District Policy Committee Members

**FROM:** Jeffrey W. Aluotto, Solid Waste Manager  
Cory R. Chadwick, Director

**I. Introduction/Opening Comments**

**NOTICE: This memo is for the meeting to be held on March 10, 2005. This meeting will be held at 2:00 pm at the Hamilton County Department of Environmental Services, 250 William Howard Taft Road, Cincinnati, Ohio 45219.**

*Policy Committee Information (Agendas, Manager's Memos, Minutes, etc.) now available on the District's Website at [www.hcdoes.org](http://www.hcdoes.org).*

**II. Clerk's Report/Additions to the Agenda**

**A. Approval of Minutes – Minutes from the January 13, 2005 Policy Committee meetings are included as Attachment A.**

**B. Additions to the Agenda**

Please contact Susan Schumacher at 513-946-7734 or [susan.schumacher@hamilton-co.org](mailto:susan.schumacher@hamilton-co.org) if you have items to add to the agenda.

**III. District Revenue Updates/Analysis**

Updates will be provided on current revenue receipts and comparisons with prior years, as included in Attachment B.

**IV. Policy Items**

**A. State Tipping Fee Increase**

Governor Taft's 2006-2007 budget includes the proposal of increasing the State tipping fee by \$2.75 in order to fund the operations of OEPA and ODNR (Division of Recycling and Litter Prevention). Included as Attachment C is an analysis of this fee increase proposal – including its likely effects on waste generators within Hamilton County. The primary impacts of this fee increase, to the District, will be potential cuts in municipal recycling programs and/or potential lost revenue – as it becomes cheaper to export waste out of State.

Informal conversations with representatives of local political subdivisions indicate that, despite the potential for the fee increase, recycling maintains relatively strong policy

support. However, programming could be more vulnerable in the future if costs continue to increase.

**Staff Recommendation:** *To the degree that it does not negatively impact other interests of the County, the District should ensure that the State legislature is adequately informed of the impacts of the State fee increase on Hamilton County. Staff recommends that correspondence be sent to Hamilton County's local legislative delegation, and members of the House Ways and Means Committee, detailing the following points.*

- 1. The portion of the State fee increase earmarked for recycling programming will cost waste generators in Hamilton County approximately \$1 million while returning comparatively little benefit\* in terms of recycling assistance. With that said, it is imperative that the amount and subsequent use of those funds be strictly analyzed.*
- 2. At minimum, agencies should be required to more openly justify the amount of the proposed fees and subsequent revenues. This would include a public analysis of the efficiency and effectiveness of programs funded through these fees.*
- 3. ODNR, specifically, should be asked to consider how State recycling grant programs may be modified to provide greater assistance to local communities burdened by the fee increase and how any excess funds raised under the fee will be targeted (e.g. will there be increased emphasis on collection programs vs. buy-recycled, education, and market development? Will increased flexibility be built into the use of ODNR grant funds?). In addition, if these fees do ultimately result in a retrenchment of recycling programs throughout the State, it should be inquired as to whether OEPA will provide Districts with flexibility toward meeting State recycling mandates.*

\* Hamilton County currently receives approximately \$280,000 in grant funding, from ODNR-DRLP, on an annual basis (not including periodic market development grants). Approximately \$140,000 of this amount is received directly by Keep Cincinnati Beautiful to perform litter prevention activities and awareness in the City of Cincinnati (Being over 50,000 in population, Cincinnati is eligible to apply for its own grant). As the District does little with regards to litter prevention, this programming is an excellent complement to the recycling and waste management programming provided by the District.

In addition to these points, it should be recognized that higher State fees enhance the likelihood that waste, currently being deposited at in-District landfills, will begin to flow out-of-State. This would have revenue implications to the District. The District should be cognizant of this issue and may wish to ensure that State officials are aware of these local waste flow impacts.

In summary, State recycling programming does provide some benefit to the District. However, from a financial perspective, these benefits may be overshadowed by the costs imposed through this new fee mechanism. It is the position of District staff that while there may be little hope of salvaging the Corporate Franchise Tax, it was in fact the most equitable means of funding such programming as it was applied to the businesses deemed to be contributing to the litter stream. A component of the tax was actually negotiated as a compromise to enacting a State-wide bottle bill in 1981. With this said, ODNR should be

asked to review and adjust its programming to help reduce the negative impacts of the proposed fee increase. All agencies covered under the fee increase should be made to justify requested revenues.

Finally, the District has been approached by the Solid Waste Authority of Central Ohio which is coordinating a coalition of larger urban Districts to address this issue at the State level. There may, in fact, be some advantage to the District participating in this effort as a means of positively driving the discussion at the State level. District staff will be discussing this issue internally and will have more information for the Policy Committee at the meeting on March 10.

**B. Host Community Fee**

The Policy Committee will have the opportunity to continue its discussion relating to Mr. Fiedeldey's suggestion that the District support a legislative amendment which would increase the compensation for communities hosting a solid waste landfill. This discussion was tabled at the January meeting. Included as Attachment D is the District staff analysis performed on this issue.

**C. School Grant Program**

Each year, the Solid Waste Management District awards grants, to schools for the implementation of recycling programs.

This year, the District received applications from three schools, each of which are recommended for funding. Analysis of the grant proposals are included as Attachment E.

*Staff Recommendation: District Staff recommends awarding School Grants on the basis outlined in the Staff Analysis included as Attachment E.*

**V. Information/Discussion Items**

**A. Nu-Blend Update**

District staff will provide an update on the current status of Nu-Blend Paints.

**B. Electronics and Household Hazardous Waste Events**

The District will be re-opening its HHW collection sites on May 3. Two sites will open for the convenience of Hamilton County residents. The first site will be the Environmental Enterprises (EEI) site located on Spring Grove Avenue. The second will be located at another EEI facility on Cincinnati-Dayton Road.

The Spring Grove Avenue site will be open Tuesday from 3:00 – 8:00 p.m., Thursday 10:00 – 3:00 p.m and Saturday 9:00 – 1:00 p.m. The Cincinnati Dayton Road site will be open Wednesday from 3:00 – 8:00 p.m. and Friday from 9:00 – 1:00 p.m.

The District's computer collection event will take place in June and will utilize the facilities of Technology Recycling Group (TRG) in Reading. The District will be spending \$15,000 for a week-long collection event at this location versus \$30,000 in years past using facilities in northern Ohio.

### **C. 2005 Yardwaste Drop-off Program**

The District's yardwaste sites will be opening in April. This year the District will be utilizing a different site for its east-side location. Bzak Landscaping was the District's lowest and best bid for the east side location. While District staff will have to ensure that residents are adequately informed of the change, this new site should save the District close to \$60,000 over the four year term of the contract.

### **D. District Plan Update**

Following the completion of the Policy Committee work sessions on February 24, District Staff and RW Beck have been working on compiling the draft plan for submittal to OEPA. The deadline for submitting the draft plan is April 15. After submitting the draft, the District will await an advisory opinion from OEPA before making any changes. Please see Attachment F for a summary of the Planning Process.

During the Plan Work Sessions, the following themes were discussed and will be incorporated into the Plan Update:

**Capacity:** The District will possess adequate disposal capacity throughout the upcoming planning period. District staff will perform a capacity analysis on an every-other-year basis in order to ensure that this capacity is maintained. The District will also obtain annual facility data reports from all landfills receiving District waste.

**District Finances:** In order to adequately fund desired programs, the District will use the following hierarchy of funding options:

1. Cost cutting and program efficiencies will always be considered as a first option for funding programs.
2. If an increase in disposal fees are necessary in order to finance District programs, such an increase should be no more than \$1.20 - \$2.40 - \$1.20, after which a generation fee would be implemented if necessary.
3. Staff will continue to monitor the practical and legal developments relating to implementation of designation fees in other parts of the State.

The Policy Committee also determined that the District's carry-over should comprise no more than 50% of the District's operating budget.

**Siting Strategy:** It was determined that a siting strategy was not a necessary component of the District's Plan Update as the District would not be proposing to construct a new facility.

However, the District will incorporate, into the Plan Update, language which will bind the District to updating and revising the current siting strategy for potential future use.

**District Grant Programs:** The Policy Committee determined that the current RRI program should be modified to encourage improved program performance. In practicality, this will entail rewarding communities, in part, based on their recycling rate – not just on the tonnage they recycle. This will ensure that communities are rewarded more on the performance of their program than simply on the quantity of recyclables they collect.

In addition, the District’s Reduction Assistance Grant will be modified to focus annually on specific priorities of the District Policy Committee.

**Organics:** The Policy Committee determined that Staff should analyze the impact of including yard waste tonnages into the RRI program while also performing annual sales of backyard composting bins. It was determined that, in future years, user fees would be considered for operation of the yardwaste drop-off sites.

**Household Hazardous Waste:** The District should continue HHW programming in a manner consistent with the current pilot program.

**Other Policy Committee Suggestions:** Policy Committee members suggested the following additional components of future District programming:

1. As a means of reducing costs to communities, explore the viability of solid waste franchise agreements or collective bidding arrangements.
2. Improve recycling programming at special events.
3. Work with OEPA to devise a credit mechanism for backyard composting activities.

**VI. Tentative Future Agenda Items**

**VII. Policy Committee Members' Comments**

**VIII. Public Comments**

**IX. Upcoming District Meetings**

The next Policy Committee meeting is scheduled for May 12, 2005 at 2 pm. The meeting will be held at Environmental Services, 250 William Howard Taft Road.

**X. Adjournment (Target Time: 3:30 pm)**