

Recology Rate Increase Not Justified

Concerning the March 18 Appeal Democrat story re Recology rate increase approved by Yuba City and Live Oak.

I have a number of emails from Wendy Wyles of the Central Valley Water Quality Control Board which state there are no new regulations. That fact was confirmed by Phil Graham, general manager of the Ostrom Road Landfill and Feather River Organics, at the March 15 Yuba City Council meeting. Graham indicated there are more stringent site-specific requirements.

Here are two email excerpts from Wyles of the Water Board:

- Nov. 10, 2015: “Title 27 regulations have not changed; the 2015 WDRs reference the same regulations as the 2003 WDRs. However, because Recology has a release of waste (ie, groundwater beneath the landfill is impacted), the 2013 CAO and 2015 WDRs required it to take further steps to implement Title 27 to mitigate the current impacts and prevent future impacts.”
- March 11, 2016: “The regulations have not changed. What has changed is the implementation of those regulations based on the conditions found to date at the landfill.”

Recology had not complied with California Title 27 Environmental Protection rules or the 2003 Waste Discharge Orders (WDRs) and was therefore required to take further steps to comply.

Councilman Stan Cleveland and Councilwoman Preet Didbal voted against the rate increase at the March 1 meeting, but changed their vote to yes at the March 15 meeting saying they had received additional information. Immediately after that meeting I asked Cleveland and Didbal if they had contacted the Water Quality Board for its side of the issue. Both said they had not and that they got their information from Recology. None of the other councilmembers indicated they had contacted the Water Board. I sent this information to AD reporter Andrew Creasey, but he did not use it and I question whether he contacted the Water Board for its side of the issue.

So, folks, without a fair and unbiased evaluation of the Recology rate increase request, the Yuba City Council voted to have the rate payers pay for improvements to the green recycling operation at the Marysville dump site. And this is after a several year history of problems with the recycling operation including Water Board Notices of Violation on April 14, 2011, August 12, 2011, March 28, 2012 and May 14, 2012. When Recology did not correct the deficiencies which caused the Notices of Violation, a Cleanup and Abatement Order (CAO) was issued on August 29, 2013. Recology then failed to comply with the Cleanup and Abatement Order and was fined \$440,440 in January 2015.

There is also a conflict of interest issue. Recology routinely donates to candidates running for local office. My information is Recology donates \$1,000 to incumbents and \$700 to non-incumbents. Last May, Recology provided a lunch for more than 350 Sutter County employees. Is Recology buying votes?

The Yuba City Council did not look out for the rate payers. Yuba County and Live Oak have already approved the rate increase. Sutter County, Wheatland and Marysville have yet to approve it and I encourage them to do the research and look out for the rate payers instead of voting to maintain their cozy relationship with Recology.

Keep this in mind at election time.

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