

HANFORD SOLID WASTE

SYNOPSIS

In the last 50 years, the disposal of municipal and other solid waste has changed from “dump it anywhere” to a highly managed system for the control of atmospheric and underground water pollution. Currently over 50% of the solid waste is recycled, and the balance is placed in plastic lined sites at the Waste Management site facility in the Kettleman Hills.

WHY THE GRAND JURY INVESTIGATED

Public interest

AUTHORITY

Penal Code Section 925a: The Grand Jury may, at any time, examine the books and records of any incorporated city in the county.

METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

The Grand Jury heard testimony from Hanford’s public works director and visited the sites of the Kings Waste and Recycling Authority and the Waste Management disposal site in the Kettleman Hills.

BACKGROUND AND FACTS

Disposal of solid waste has been a problem since people have lived in large communities. In Kings County, as little as 50 years ago, the City of Hanford dumped its solid waste at a burning dump at the corner of Houston and 11th Avenue, creating a nuisance and health issue. A task force consisting of engineers from the county and the cities of Lemoore, Corcoran and Hanford was created to investigate and make recommendations to improve the situation. Many sites were visited at each city, including the possibility of a joint site somewhere in the Kettleman Hills. A site in the Kettleman Hills would require a collection station so that the waste could be consolidated before being transported that distance. Sites were selected in each of the three cities. Using a site already existing in Avenal, which at the time was not an incorporated city, was also considered. The site selected for Hanford has been filled, but is still in use by the Kings Waste and Recycling Authority.

Senate Bill 5 (SB5) was passed in 1972 and established the Solid Waste Management Board. A string of laws governing waste disposal followed, each making more stringent regulations in order to improve air and groundwater quality. The Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989 (AB939) established the Waste Management Board and required local jurisdictions to recycle 25% of their waste by 1995 and 50% by 2000. This was why Kings County formed the Kings Waste and Recycling Authority.

SB20, in 2006, established E-waste recycling laws, requiring special handling of electronic waste such as computers, television sets and cell phones.

The City of Hanford refuse service is operated as an enterprise and provides refuse service to residential areas by requiring the use of three containers, which are picked up weekly by side loading trucks:

1. The blue container is used for material that can be recycled (cans, bottles, paper, plastics, etc)
2. The green container is for waste that can be composted (grass, leaves, tree trimmings, etc)
3. The black container is for material that will be taken to the dump (wet garbage, etc)

The city also provides commercial service, using rear loading trucks which pick up one, two and three cubic yards containers. Larger containers such as those used on construction sites are furnished by commercial vendors, not by the city.

Recycle material is sorted by hand into different categories and then compacted and sold. Green waste is sold to another company for composting. All material picked up by the city is taken to the Kings Waste and Recycling site. The black container material is combined with that from the other two cities, then compacted and taken to the Waste Management site in Kettleman Hills.

The Kettleman Hills Waste Management site is located on the Kettleman anticline and positioned in such a manner, that should any leakage occur, it flows away from all populated areas. Material is dumped in excavated areas that are lined with a system that is designed to prevent contamination to the ground water. Waste Management is making a continuing effort to protect the environment in the area and is maintaining a close relationship with the Kettleman City community.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding #1

The city is complying with all laws pertaining to solid waste disposal and is providing excellent service.

RECOMMENDATION

None

RESPONSE REQUIREMENT

None

REPLY REQUIRED

None