



# COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

## DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

*"To Enrich Lives Through Effective and Caring Service"*

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IN REPLY PLEASE

REFER TO FILE: **EP-2**

June 1, 2006

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Donald L. Wolfe  
Director of Public Works

### **SUNSHINE CANYON LANDFILL-COUNTY EXTENSION CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT NO. 00-194-(5)**

On June 7, 2006, your Board will be considering an appeal of the Regional Planning Commission's decision to deny a proposed replacement Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for the Sunshine Canyon Landfill, which was filed by Browning-Ferris Industries, Inc. We believe the replacement CUP is more protective of the community and the environment than the current CUP, and encourages full utilization of Landfill capacity on the City side, which would assist us in meeting the disposal needs of County residents. We also believe that key issues still of concern to the Commission and the community, such as traffic congestion and imposition of a closure date, could be satisfactorily addressed within the replacement CUP.

The Department of Regional Planning, in concert with Public Works, County Counsel, and other County Departments, drafted the proposed replacement CUP to clarify ambiguous language in the existing 1993 CUP, incorporate additional measures to protect and enhance the community, and encourage full utilization of the Landfill's remaining disposal capacity within the City of Los Angeles as envisioned by your Board in granting the existing CUP. Despite the significant enhancements proposed in the replacement CUP to further protect the community, project opponents remained concerned about traffic, landfill closure requirements, and other issues. They also claimed the City permit is more protective than the replacement CUP.

On November 21, 2005, the Regional Planning Commission narrowly voted to deny the replacement CUP. The Commission agreed with the project opponents that the Landfill should have a closure date and that traffic was still an issue despite the proposed traffic mitigations. The Commission indicated that your Board should address these issues since they were public policy decisions.

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We carefully reviewed the issues raised by the project opponents and it is our opinion that the replacement CUP, when compared to the City's requirements, is stricter and more protective of the community in many ways while allowing the Landfill to be operated efficiently. The environmental safeguards incorporated in the replacement CUP are among the most comprehensive safeguards imposed on any landfill in the nation. For example, under the replacement CUP, closure and post-closure maintenance activities are required in perpetuity or until the Landfill no longer poses a risk to public health and safety and the environment. Regarding traffic mitigation, all traffic impacts have been mitigated to our satisfaction as required under the California Environmental Quality Act. Furthermore, \$0.50 per ton will be dedicated for additional traffic enhancements in the areas surrounding the Landfill (totaling \$9 million over the life of the Landfill).

It is essential that we support full utilization of Sunshine Canyon Landfill and other in-County landfills. As the lead County agency advising your Board on waste management issues, Public Works is responsible for preparing and annually updating the Los Angeles County Countywide Siting Element which was approved by a majority of cities of Los Angeles County and adopted by your Board in January 1998. As mandated by State law, the Siting Element outlines the County's strategy to ensure adequate disposal capacity to meet the needs of its residents for a minimum of 15 years. To meet this requirement, the Siting Element contains a policy to enhance in-County disposal capacity to the extent environmentally and technically feasible, including seeking the full utilization of capacity at Sunshine Canyon Landfill. This allows us to better control how our waste is managed, assures access to disposal capacity, and protects County residents from excessive costs. Our most recent analysis shows that Los Angeles County exports nearly 20 percent (7,400 tons per day) of solid waste to other Counties, primarily Riverside and Orange Counties. This figure is expected to rise, and we estimate the County may experience a landfill capacity shortfall of over 80 percent (39,000 tons per day) of the waste in need of disposal by 2019 if projected in-County capacity is not fully realized.

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cc: Chief Administrative Office  
County Counsel  
Executive Office  
Regional Planning