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February 3, 2016

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Cynthia A. Harding, M.P.H.
Interim Director

SUBJECT: **SUNSHINE CANYON LANDFILL**

This is in response to the January 5, 2016 Board motion instructing the Department of Public Health (DPH) to report back to your Board on findings and recommendations regarding odors occurring in the Sunshine Canyon Community.

Regulatory Oversight of Sunshine Canyon Landfill

DPH and the City of Los Angeles jointly share jurisdiction of the Sunshine Canyon Landfill (SCL) and together are the Local Enforcement Agency (LEA) authorized by CalRecycle to regulate the day-to-day operation of the landfill on behalf of the State. The LEA has determined that currently the SCL is operating in compliance with the state regulations the LEA enforces. The LEA is one of many agencies responsible for regulation of landfill operations. Other agencies include the Los Angeles County Departments of Public Works (DPW) and Regional Planning (DRP), as well as the South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD). The AQMD is the lead regulatory agency responsible for investigation and validation of odor and air quality concerns.

Background on Odors at SCL

In recent years, there has been an increase in reporting of odors by the community. AQMD reports that they have received an average of about 1,375 annual odor complaints for the years 2011-2015. While numerous odor complaints have been made to AQMD, DPH has not received reports from medical providers about illnesses associated with these odors. However, odors can impact well-being and quality of life, which are important to the public's health.

When investigating the cause of the odors, regulatory agencies first attributed the problem to incoming fresh trash and wind patterns. However, further investigation determined that the main source of the problem was excessive landfill gas escaping into the community. In 2013, the LEA, DPW, DRP, and the AQMD were part of a workgroup charged with making recommendations on how the odor problem could be addressed. To date, several of the workgroup's recommendations

have been fully implemented. Most significantly, the facility has upgraded a component of its gas collection system and implemented a pilot project in 2015 incorporating a specialized tarp designed to mitigate odors. The community continues to register odor complaints with the AQMD, indicating that further updates to the gas collection need to be undertaken and additional mitigation measures need to be employed.

Current Actions to Address the Odors at SCL

The LEA continues to work with DPW, AQMD, and the owner of the site, Republic Services, to further understand the remaining causes of odors and to determine additional methods that can be implemented at SCL to mitigate the odors. In December 2015, AQMD was requested to conduct an updated air quality assessment, which will include the indoor space at the local elementary school. This request will be discussed at the upcoming SCL-LEA board meeting in March 2016. Further, County Counsel and the City Attorney for Los Angeles have been asked to provide a determination on Republic Services' responsibility to comply with orders issued by DPW about the gas collection system and other engineering controls at SCL.

In addition to its role as the LEA, DPH is working to align mitigation measures among Republic Services, AQMD, DPW, and the LEA. To further this, DPH is meeting with each agency to understand its mitigation plans. Once these meetings are complete, DPH will assess whether additional measures need to be implemented at SCL, and it will present its findings at the upcoming SCL-LEA board meeting.

To provide the community with information about recent developments and to continue to participate in a forum for discussion, DPH is a member of the SCL Community Advisory Committee (CAC). The CAC is comprised of residents that live in areas adjacent to SCL, Republic Services, DPH, and the Fifth Supervisorial District.

As DPH continues to collaborate with County agencies and external parties, we will keep you informed of significant developments in our efforts.

If you have questions or need additional information, please let me know.

CAH:jt

c: Chief Executive Officer
County Counsel
Acting Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors