

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR LINDSEY P. HORVATH AND KATHRYN BARGER

Audit of Sunshine Canyon Landfill Operations and Odor Mitigation Efforts

Sunshine Canyon Landfill (Sunshine Canyon) is a Class III municipal solid waste landfill owned by Browning Ferris Industries of California / Republic Services. It is the largest landfill by total annual tonnage of municipal solid waste in Los Angeles County, though it is not authorized to accept hazardous waste. The Sunshine Canyon is located in both the City of Los Angeles and the unincorporated area of Los Angeles County, adjacent to the Third District communities of Sylmar and Granada Hills.

Over the last year, particularly due to historic rainfall beginning in early 2023, nearby residents have been hampered by persistent gas and fresh trash odors emanating from the landfill, presenting an unreasonable burden on neighboring communities. As a result of these odors, the number of complaints received by the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) in 2023 increased by 163% year-on-year, with 1,721 complaints in 2023 compared to 653 in 2022 and leading the SCAQMD to issue nearly 63 odor-related Notices of Violation (NOV) compared to 12 in 2022. This trend has continued with more than 678 complaints and 26 NOVs issued in the first quarter of 2024.

Regulation of Sunshine Canyon is jurisdictionally complex. It is governed by a County Conditional Use Permit (00-194-(5)) and City of Los Angeles ordinance (17-2933) which regulate

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certain landfill operations such as limits on the total allowable daily tonnage and traffic restrictions. A joint County-City Local Enforcement Agency (SCL-LEA), an independent public health monitor regulates public health and waste management standards set by CalRecycle, for Sunshine Canyon. The SCAQMD, a separate State regulator, is responsible for investigating and citing air quality and odor complaints at the site. Operations are informed by a Technical Advisory Committee and a Community Advisory Committee, whose members volunteer their time to ensure appropriate operations at Sunshine Canyon. Addressing the persistent odor complaints emanating from operational challenges requires a synchronized effort among various regulators.

To better coordinate solutions on behalf of surrounding communities, the County convened the Sunshine Canyon Inter-Agency Working Group in October 2023. The working group is comprised of Supervisorial District 3, Supervisorial District 5, Los Angeles City Council District 12, the Joint County and City SCL-LEA, County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works, County of Los Angeles Department of Public Health, County of Los Angeles Department of Regional Planning, Los Angeles City Planning, City of Los Angeles Department of Public Works, and SCAQMD. The purpose of the working group is to ensure that the various regulatory agencies coordinate to streamline monitoring and enforcement actions to address operational challenges. The group is also working with the landfill operator to ensure all remedial measures are implemented as swiftly as possible.

At various moments throughout 2023, BFI/Republic, SCL-LEA, and SCAQMD proposed various technical fixes to address odors at the landfill, including operational changes to trash

management, placement of cover material, and installation of gas wells. Regulators and the landfill operator have generally worked collaboratively to identify and quickly deploy solutions. In recent weeks, the SCL-LEA in coordination with the SCAQMD has recommended additional odor mitigation measures with the objective of stemming landfill gas and fresh trash odors impacting the nearby communities.

Regrettably, odor complaints remain at historically high levels, negatively impacting residents' quality of life. Although the County and other regulatory agencies have been working collaboratively to address the odors, additional remedies must be explored. The operations of the landfill must adapt to a new reality of climate change where more intense storms are to be expected and effectively managed.

WE, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct the Department of Regional Planning, Department of Public Works, and Department of Public Health, as part of the Sunshine Canyon Landfill Technical Advisory Committee, to pursue the following actions:

1. Engage an independent technical expert to provide an assessment of the odor issues that occurred at the Sunshine Canyon Landfill between 2023 and 2024, a diagnostic of which remediation actions worked, and which did not, and recommendations for the near- and long-term, operations of the landfill to ensure these odor issues are effectively addressed.
2. Coordinate with the Sunshine Canyon Landfill Local Enforcement Agency and South Coast Air Quality Management District to seek the independent review and expert opinion

of CalRecycle on lasting solutions to resolve odor issues.

3. Report back to the Board within 30 days with a strategy to procure this external technical review, ideally through an existing contracting mechanism where costs are borne by the landfill operator or state regulators.
4. Report back to the Board within 150 days, and before the start of the traditional rainy season, with the findings and recommended operational changes at Sunshine Canyon Landfill.
5. Continue to regularly convene the Sunshine Canyon Inter-Agency Working Group until odor issues are resolved.

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