



Health Issues of Proposed Cedar Hills Landfill Expansion

by Peter Rimbos, GMVUAC Corresponding Secretary

On Monday, December 2, the Area Council held its monthly meeting. As a followup to our September Monthly Meeting, at which we convened an Expert Panel, we invited as our Guest Speaker, Dr. Richard C. Honour, who presented and discussed the various health and environmental issues related to the proposed continuation and expansion of the Cedar Hills Landfill. Also invited was Rick Hess from the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency to speak of Landfill air monitoring. The King County Comprehensive Plan also was discussed.

Puget Sound Clean Air Agency (PSCAA)

Rick Hess, PSCAA Inspection Manager described the PSCAA as a special-purpose four-county regional agency established under the Washington Clean Air Act in 1967. In a brochure made available, it described the Agency's vision as: *"everyone, everywhere to breathe clean, healthy air all the time – regardless of whom they are or where they live. In addition to reducing air pollution overall, we also focus on equity, so nobody is more at risk because of where they live or their socioeconomic status. No community in our region should bear disproportionate burdens and exposure from air pollution. To be relevant and serve all people in our four counties, we reach out and listen to community concerns and make room to work with issues new to us. Our commitment to equity and environmental justice means taking the time to build and invest in relationships with a range of constituents, from partner institutions to academic and grassroots organizations."*

Mr. Hess described air inspections at the Cedar Hills Landfill, which is a Title 5 facility under Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) guidelines as established under the Federal Clean Air Act. The Act requires major sources of air pollutants to obtain and operate in compliance with a Title 5 Operating Permit. Being a delegated program by EPA, PSCAA ensures the conditions of such permits are followed.

During inspections, PSCAA visually inspects the landfill gas collection system and incineration equipment to ensure its being maintained in good working order and constructed and operated as approved. For example, the gas flares when landfill gas is not directed to the on-site Energy-to-Waste facility must operate at 98% destruction efficiency. Ongoing monitoring for Methane emissions on the surface of the landfill is another requirement. In addition, PSCAA reviews temperature logs, gas concentration logs, and air monitoring reports, as well as assures correct test methods are used. Other requirements include reviewing maintenance records, operation and maintenance plans and their complaint monitoring and response program.

Mr. Hess explained how the Cedar Hills Landfill also must self-monitor for compliance, which includes monitoring and measuring emissions. Under Title 5, deviations of permit requirements must be reported to the PSCAA. Air Permits issued for new and modified sources of emissions at the landfill requires use of best available control technology. PSCAA ensures permit requirements are met with monetary penalties leveled for non-compliance. There are Federal rules that also must be met that address hazardous air pollutants.

PSCAA acts as Federal representatives for the EPA to ensure Federal rules are met and as State representatives for the Department of Ecology to ensure State rules are met.

Citizen complaints can be filed with the PSCAA (see: <https://www.pscleanair.gov/262/File-a-Complaint>).

Cedar Hills Landfill Proposed Expansion

Dr. Richard C. Honour is a founder and principal of *Save Our Soil* (<https://saveoursoil.us>) and *The Precautionary Group (TPG)*, which are environmental organizations dedicated to ending land disposal of toxic sewage sludge. Dr. Honour has a BS in Biology from San Diego State University and a PhD in Plant Pathology/Soil Microbiology from UC-Riverside.

Dr. Honour discussed his work, which emphasizes sampling, analysis, and documenting adverse environmental impacts of Land-Disposed Toxic Sewage Sludge in western Washington, as well central Washington agricultural regions. His focus has been on the presence, concentration, and impacts of many toxic chemicals, including PFAs, Dioxins/Furans, PCBs, Polybrominated Diphenyl Ether (PBDE) Flame Retardants, as well as several toxic Metals.

Dr. Honour also has investigated volatile toxic gasses generated and released into the environment by the Land-Disposal of Toxic Sewage Sludges. These volatile gasses contribute directly to air pollution, including the emission of identified Greenhouse Gasses (GHGs).

Land-Disposed Toxic Sewage Sludge is proving to be a major contributing source of toxic volatile GHG chemicals, i.e., toxic volatile chemicals of the Toxic Sewage Sludge Volatilome. His test results reveal high levels of carcinogenic and neurotoxic volatile chemicals in Land-Disposed Sludges. Dr. Honour seeks the abolition of land-disposed toxic waste, such as non-recyclable plastics; toxic sewage sludges; municipal solid waste; and industrial waste.

Solutions presented by Dr. Honour include both green-waste solutions and thermal decomposition of solid wastes by clean and green Waste-to Energy (WTE) solutions. He provided examples from Spokane where they prioritized the waste stream cycle: 1. reduce, 2. recycle, 3. WTE, 4. Landfill (restricted to drywall glass and other non-hazardous or less hazardous waste). Spokane reduced its waste products, generated energy from landfills, and created byproducts such as valuable ash—all through the thermal decomposition of solid wastes. Such thermal decomposition facilities use extremely high heat to break down substances to their basic chemical compositions.

Unfortunately, much of what we recycle really isn't recyclable anymore due to reduced markets and mixed products that aren't just paper or just plastic. Dr. Honour also stated that the problem is growing, since 62% of America's GDP is consumption—which increases our waste streams. This percentage keeps increasing (i.e., grows faster than the GDP).

Dr. Honour also emphasized the externalities associated with decision making. Concluding that it is less costly to fix pollution today than to pay for the future Public Health consequences, but these latter costs are seldom considered when making discussions, especially on landfilling and toxic sewage sludge. He stated the savings in health care costs alone would pay for it all.

He also discussed King County's actions or inactions in this area. Currently, King County toxic sludge (Persistent Organic Pollutants; Chemical of Emerging Concerns; Persistent, Bioaccumulative Toxics) from our municipal sewage plants is trucked to Eastern Washington--6,800 double dump trucks (170,000 tons) per year. However, King County and the State do not test for the most critical pollutants. Dr. Honour indicated they need to test for Dioxins/Furans, PCBs, PDBEs, and PFAs, plus a large percentage of Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) which contribute to GHG emissions.

Concerned members of the Public can contact the Area Council at: info@gmvuac.org to connect with the Environment Committee on these issues.

King County Comprehensive Plan (KCCP)

The Area Council discussed submitting two "*Docket Item (D.I.) Requests*" to amend the KC Code.

The first D.I. Request would ensure that any “*site-specific rezones*” not be reviewed during any KCCP update, but rather go through a *Type 4 permit review process* before a Hearing Examiner, along with a Public Hearing, for a recommendation to the King County Council regarding any changes to the KCCP and zoning.

The second D.I. Request calls for the King County Council to prepare and publish written responses to Public Comments on KCCP updates, as does the King County Executive already does.

The Area Council voted to approve both D.I. Requests and submit them to KCCP Manager, Ivan Miller. For more information please see the Area Council's KCCP web pages: <http://gmvuac.org/hot-off-the-presses/> and <http://gmvuac.org/kc-comprehensive-plan/>.

Upcoming Area Council Meetings

All regular monthly meetings are held on the first Monday of the month, from 7 - 9:30 PM, at the Maple Valley Fire Station located at the SE corner of SE 231st St & SR-169 intersection (directly across from the Police Precinct). All members of the Public are welcome. Each meeting begins with an open Public Comment period. Guest Speakers for upcoming 2020 monthly meetings are being planned.

Your Area Council serves as an all-volunteer, locally elected advisory body to King County on behalf of all rural unincorporated area residents living in the Tahoma School District. Please see the Area Council's web site: www.gmvuac.org.

Area Council Vision Statement: *“Our community’s Rural Character will be supported by facilitating strong local ties and communication between the public, organizations, and government; promoting locally owned businesses and supporting quality education; protecting the environment, and maintaining landowners’ rights and responsibilities; promoting controlled and well-planned growth with appropriate infrastructure; ensuring proper representation for rural interests and needs; and supporting the health and safety and the privacy of our vibrant community.”*

The sixteen-seat Area Council currently has several open seats. If you have an interest in joining please send us an e-mail at: info@gmvuac.org or attend one of our monthly meetings and express such interest for consideration by the Area Council.