

PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

El Dorado County Waste Disposal System

Reason for the Report

The Grand Jury selected the waste disposal system of the County for a 2002/2003 general review.

Scope of the Investigation

The members of the Grand Jury:

- Interviewed the El Dorado County Director of Environmental Management;
- Visited the Diamond Springs waste disposal facility on February 18, 2003;
- Was briefed on the process of sorting recyclables;
- Inspected the buildings and grounds of the Diamond Springs facility;
- Reviewed Grand Jury reports for 2000/2001 and 2001/2002 and found no findings or recommendations pertaining to waste management.

Background

The County was mandated by the State of California to reduce, by 50 percent, the amount of waste going to landfills by 2002. An extension was allowed to July 2005, with a good faith review in July 2004. The Grand Jury investigation revealed that the County of El Dorado is not making good progress toward meeting the State mandate. The contractor is recycling about 25 percent of total waste while other waste removal companies are recycling at least 45 percent. A \$10,000 per day fine for violation of the State's mandate is possible after the July 2004 state review.

The County is reviewing the contract with the contractor to determine if the contractor is moving toward compliance with the State mandate. To help meet this mandate, the contractor replaced upper management in November 2002 at the Diamond Springs facility. The new manager has stated they are now recycling at least 25 percent of the waste. New programs such as Blue Bags and Yellow Bags for recycling material are being considered.

Non-recycled trash is trucked to a landfill near Reno, Nevada. Mixed recyclables are sent to the contractor's sorting facility near Lodi, California. Some of cardboard and newspapers are baled at the Diamond Springs facility for resale to recycling companies. All measurements are tracked by incoming and outgoing weights. With County growth on the rise the Diamond Springs facility

