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Resource Recovery Project Begins Environmental Review

Today, the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors approved private consulting contracts that formally begin the environmental review of the Resource Recovery Project which would increase recycling, provide compost, generate green energy and reduce future greenhouse gas emissions related to the management of the communities' solid waste.

The County Department of Public Works, in collaboration with the cities of Santa Barbara, Goleta, Solvang and Buellton, is proposing to develop a Resource Recovery Project that would process municipal solid waste (MSW) currently disposed at the County owned and operated Tajiguas Landfill.

Supervisor Salud Carbajal says that "This is another case of our community being a leader in sustainability by recycling even more than we do now and getting even closer to zero waste. This is a financially responsible local solution to managing our communities' waste that places us back into a leadership position in environmental action."

The communities participating in this project currently have a recycling rate above 70%. The proposed Resource Recovery Project would increase the region's recycling rate above 80% by sorting through the MSW, pulling out recyclables for sale and processing discarded organic material into biogas and compost.

Mark Schleich, the Deputy Director of County Public Works and the head of the Resource Recovery & Waste Management Division explains "Pulling misplaced recyclables out of our trash is the first step in reducing greenhouse gases for this project by avoiding the mining and harvesting of new materials. However, organic material like food waste or greenwaste when buried also has the potential of creating greenhouse gases. The Resource Recovery Project would anaerobically digest organic material, further reducing greenhouse gas emissions, generating green energy and providing compost. The electricity produced from this process will power over 1,000 homes in the County."

Mr. Schleich also notes that "By capturing potential greenhouse gases from organic waste in an anaerobic digester and recycling any bottles or cans accidentally thrown away in the trash, this project will have the same carbon emissions impact as removing more than 22,000 cars off of our streets. No other local project has the ability to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions at this level."

Supervisor Doreen Farr has noted that "Exporting our waste to another landfill or expanding the one we have are financially and environmentally expensive options. The proposed Resource

Recovery Project is cost competitive and benefits the environment and the local economy. Since this project is a public-private partnership between the participating local governments, this project will bring over \$50 million in private capital invested in the local economy that will bring our community new jobs in the expanding field of environmental resource management.”

For additional information: www.ResourceRecoveryProject.com.

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