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Staff Report for Reassessment of Household Hazardous Waste Fee Proposal

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Alameda County Waste Management Authority (ACWMA) is considering a measure to restructure services and fees for the Alameda County Household Hazardous Waste Program. The measure would add a fee to the property tax rolls of all Alameda County residential property owners for the purpose of enhancing services at existing Alameda County Household Hazardous Waste facility sites. A protest vote mailing to property owners was mailed out in January, and a public hearing was scheduled on March 26, 2014. At the public hearing the Rental Housing Association requested that the ACWMA consider reducing the fee from \$9.55 per multifamily residential unit to \$5.00 per multifamily residential unit. The Association contends that a typical multifamily residential unit would not produce the same amount of household hazardous waste as a single-family property.

The measure will be considered at the April 23, 2014 meeting. The Executive Director of the ACWMA, Gary Wolff, has indicated that staff will pursue the original recommendation to the board of a fee of \$9.55 per single-family residential and multifamily residential unit unless additional information is provided to the ACWMA to substantiate the Rental Housing Association's request. This item is being brought before the Council for additional consideration at the request of Councilmember Pauline Cutter. The City Council should reassess the proposed measure and provide direction to Councilmember Cutter, who represents the City on the ACWMA board, on voting for or against the proposed measure in light of the request.

BACKGROUND

The ACWMA and the Source Reduction and Recycling Board are known collectively as StopWaste and function as one agency to provide waste management and program planning services in Alameda County. The ACWMA board consists of elected officials from each of the seventeen member agencies, which include the County, fourteen cities, and two sanitary districts that provide

refuse and recycling collection services. The current voting structure is weighted; whereby the City of Oakland has three votes, the County has two votes, and all other members have one vote.

The Alameda County Household Hazardous Waste Program supports four drop-off facilities located in Fremont, Hayward, Livermore, and Oakland, and satellite collection of household batteries and fluorescent lights from hardware stores and other public locations. The Fremont facility is operated by a contractor; the other three facilities are operated by County staff. Oversight and funding responsibility for the program resides with the ACWMA. The program is currently funded by a \$2.15 per ton fee on all disposed waste delivered to landfills in the County. Revenues and expenditures for the program are managed through a County trust, but the positive balance is steadily declining as revenues decrease (disposal tonnage is decreasing due to the increase in materials diverted/recycled). The current budget for the program is \$3.95 million per year and the current revenue is \$2 million per year. Thus, current program levels are unsustainable.

Analysis

The ACWMA board and its committees discussed options for the future of the program between April and July 2013, selected a “Proposed System Expansion Option” as the preferred option, and directed StopWaste staff to hold community meetings in October to get input on the option, and a proposed new annual fee to be placed on residential property tax bills to fund the option. The Proposed System Expansion Option is intended to increase participation, convenience, equity among member agencies, and long-term system efficiencies. The Proposed System Expansion Option, as well as the current program level and a third “Austerity” measure were evaluated by a private consulting firm and described in the attached *HHW Program Design and Funding - Evaluation of Future Program Options*.

The differences between the current and proposed service levels are summarized below.

Current Service Levels

- Serves 45,000 households and collects 1,443 tons per year;
- Oakland and Fremont facilities are open every week, and Hayward and Livermore facilities are open on an alternating weekly schedule;
- Oakland, Hayward and Livermore facilities are open 4 hours per day and the Fremont facility is open 5.5 hours on weekdays and 8 hours on Saturdays;
- Provides 40 monthly household days and 10 monthly business days, including drop-in days; and
- Provides 399 annual household days and 124 annual business days.

Proposed System Expansion Option

- Serves 72,000 households + 6,000 households for one-day events and collects 2,501 tons per year;
- Oakland and Fremont facilities are open Wednesday through Saturday, and Hayward and Livermore facilities are open Friday and Saturday;
- All facilities are open 5.5 hours per open weekday; three facilities (other than Fremont) are open 7 hours on Saturdays; Fremont facility is open 8 hours on Saturday;
- Provides 48 monthly household days and 12-16 monthly business days, including drop-in

days;

- Provides 621 annual household days; 48 annual business days; and
- Includes the following enhancements: 12 one-day drop-off events; County facilities accepting E-Waste; Enhanced outreach to support higher participation rates; and Point-of-Purchase Program to increase product user awareness.

Austerity Option

- Serves 20,000 households and collects 643 tons per year;
- Hayward, Oakland, and Livermore facilities are open 3 days per week on rotating basis (one facility at a time), and the Fremont facility is likely to reduce operating days and/or hours;
- Facilities are open 4 hours per open day but there are fewer open days;
- Provides 24 monthly household days and 6 monthly business days; and
- Provides 147 annual household days and 84 annual business days.

The Proposed System Expansion option is designed to increase participation and enhance convenience by expanding the hours of operation and providing a consistent weekly schedule at the four existing facility sites. In addition, the program would offer twelve one-day drop-off events at other locations throughout the county, accept electronic waste from residents, and enhance outreach to support higher participation rates. The proposed \$9.55 per single-family household or multifamily unit would generate approximately \$5 million annually for the program.

The Austerity option would reduce services down to current and future funding levels which may result in less household hazardous waste collected and a larger burden on cities and the County to collect and manage waste. The current revenue stream of \$2 million is expected to decline to \$1.2 million by FY 19-20 as landfill tonnages decline.

Fiscal Impacts

No fiscal impacts are expected with the Proposed System Expansion option.

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