

April 7, 2004

Kevin Foy, Mayor and Chapel Hill Town Council
306 North Columbia Street
Chapel Hill, NC 27516

Re: Orange County Solid Waste Management Plan – Three-Year Update

Dear Mayor Foy and Members of the Chapel Hill Town Council:

As the two current appointed Town of Chapel Hill representatives on the Orange County Solid Waste Advisory Board (SWAB), we are writing in response to a resolution passed at our meeting on January 8, 2004 and reviewed at our February 12, 2004 meeting with respect to the three- year update to the Orange County Solid Waste Management Plan (Plan). This plan was approved by the Board of Orange County Commissioners (BOCC) on March 1, 2004 and has been submitted by the BOCC to the Towns for approval.

As members of the SWAB, we have reviewed the draft revisions in the three-year update of the Plan. This draft was prepared by the Solid Waste Management Staff in response to North Carolina State Statute(s) requiring the solid waste plan updates. We, along with the rest of the SWAB, are pleased and concur with the recommendation in this plan for maintaining the aggressive goal of a 61 percent reduction in solid waste produced *per capita*. We also note that the achievement of a 45 percent waste reduction in solid waste produced *per capita* in Orange County (as of the end of 2003) is commendable and a testimony to the success of the recycling program and to the diligence of the personnel enacting the program.

The plan approved by the BOCC, while maintaining the waste reduction goal of 61 percent, does not specify a means to achieve that goal. Indeed, it eliminates construction of the Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) that has been a key component of the original Waste Management Plan until now, and does not incorporate an integrated fee structure that would include a pre-paid tipping fee as recommended by the SWAB and presented to Council early in 2003 by your representatives at that time.

The SWAB supported the adoption of the waste reduction, reuse and recycling fee financing plan approved by the BOCC to ensure financial stability to the Solid Waste Enterprise Fund. However, the SWAB also continues to endorse the future integration of a solid waste disposal fee and elimination of landfill tipping fees for all in Orange County who pay this proposed disposal fee. In summary, while the SWAB endorses the three-year Plan update as approved by the BOCC, they are concerned with deletions from the Plan of an implementation plan to

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achieve the stated goal of 61 percent reduction in solid waste. As Chapel Hill representatives to the SWAB, we concur.

The current success of Orange County's recycling program is due to the active implementation of a plan to achieve the stated goal. Elimination of a roadmap and timeline will likely slow or eliminate progress towards the future goal. To achieve these ends, the SWAB would like concurrence from Town Council to work more closely with the County Solid Waste Management Department to develop a more aggressive implementation strategy with measurable milestones for use in the next three-year plan update. It is expected that a new plan update will be filed with the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources in June of 2006 and we feel the SWAB is essential to the drafting of this update.

We cannot underestimate the importance of solid waste planning for the future, especially in light of the recent information indicating that the State of North Carolina landfill space has just 16 years until total landfill capacity is reached. Please note this projection includes the growth projections for existing landfills as well as solid waste exports to other States and landfills with capacity beyond 16 years but with restrictions on the interstate and inter-county transfer of solid waste.

We appreciate your consideration in this matter. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions or concerns.

Best Regards,

Randolph M. Kabrick

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