



Testimony of Councilmember Paul Krekorian, May 10, 2010

Public Information Meeting conducted by the City of Los Angeles' Environmental Affairs Department Solid Waste Local Enforcement Agency Athens Sun Valley Material Recovery Facility & Transfer Station

Good evening.

The residents of this community have suffered for years from the negative impacts associated with the high concentration of landfills, recycling centers and other industrial waste facilities.

In 2003, the Los Angeles City Council adopted a motion from Councilmember Tony Cardenas that created the "Sun Valley Environmental Justice Improvement Area." That effort sought to protect the residents of Sun Valley - and the surrounding communities - from the negative impacts suffered as a result of such over-concentration.

Tomorrow, the Los Angeles City Council will consider the impacts of yet another MRF proposed to open on the other side of Glenoaks, in Councilmember Cardenas' district on the old Bradley Landfill site. For several years, Councilmember Cardenas' office worked closely with the proposed facility operator and has developed a set of environmental "best practices" that minimize the impacts of new waste facilities in this community to the greatest extent possible.

The 2003 Cardenas motion, and the council's progress on the Bradley site, have highlighted the need to apply coordinated planning and environmental justice practices to the siting of new industrial and waste facilities in the area. The proposed Athens Service's Materials Recovery Facility ("MRF") lies within the Sun Valley Environmental Justice Area boundary and this proposal - and others in the area - will have profound impacts on the entire Sun Valley community. The sound principles and best practices that are now being applied to the siting of new waste facilities in Sun Valley must apply to this project as well.

Unfortunately, these community protections and the thorough processes that I have described have not taken place with respect to this application. Athens has made a number of improvements in the proposal in working with my office. While I appreciate that, so far those improvements are not sufficient. Therefore, as it is currently proposed, I must stand in opposition to this project.



In 1999, American Waste Industrial, the predecessor of what we now know today as Athens, applied for and was granted a Conditional Use Permit (“CUP”). That permit allows for the recycling of “mixed waste” and Construction and Demolition (“C&D”) materials.

There remains disagreement on whether the 1999 CUP actually entitles Athens to construct and operate a MRF for Municipal Solid Waste. However, one thing is clear: The conditions imposed by the Zoning Administrator focused almost exclusively on the C&D operations and paid very little attention to the proposed MRF, the impacts of Municipal Solid Waste and the negative impacts on air quality created by the high number of truck trips that now inundate this community.

The proposed MRF will more than double the number of truck trips coming in and out of our neighborhoods. According to the Environmental Impact Report prepared by the Local Enforcement Agency, negative air quality emissions will exceed the CEQA thresholds. Furthermore, the EIR indicates that, even with the implementation of proposed mitigation measures, harmful emissions will not be reduced to less than significant levels.

Our communities deserve better and are entitled to all of the protections available to them at the city level. Land-use expertise and familiarity with communities will always lie at the local level. Thus, we will seek to implement consistent environmental practices at the city level that will go a long way toward ensuring stronger protections for our community.

I and my staff have asked the applicant to work closely with the City of Los Angeles, the Department of City Planning, and our affected communities to craft the best possible package of mitigation measures that will protect my constituents and all of the residents of Sun Valley. When implemented, these measures will be monitored and enforced locally, by the city of Los Angeles, allowing our constituents to avoid bureaucratic red tape at the state level and have more direct engagement in the decisions that will impact their quality of life and the character of their neighborhood for generations to come.

Unfortunately, the applicant has thus far failed to agree to sufficient protections.

My office has been informed that the city’s Chief Zoning Administrator will require the applicant to file a Plan Approval application to review the current land-use conditions imposed by the 1999 CUP grant. During such process the ZA may also impose additional conditions it sees fit in order to mitigate the potentially devastating impacts the proposed MRF operation will have on our community.



I therefore request that any permit issued for the operation of a MRF be conditioned upon the applicant's receipt of a Plan Approval from the city's Office of Zoning Administration. This process will ensure that the proposed MRF will not be constructed and operated to the detriment of our community.

Thank you for your consideration of the very real concerns of the people of Sun Valley. My office stands ready to work with all state and local agencies, and with Athens, to ensure that these concerns are treated with the respect they deserve.

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