



MEMORANDUM

TO: Commissioner Joe Flores

FROM: Brian Dudley, P.E.

DATE: 3 December 2009

SUBJECT: Summary of Proposed Peñitas Landfill Expansion

The Hidalgo County Precinct 3 - Peñitas Landfill originally began waste disposal operations in 1985, and it will be filled to its current design capacity within the next three months. This landfill is a small 12.9 acre Type I-Arid Exempt landfill permitted by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) that can dispose of 20 tons per day of municipal solid waste from area residents. Other waste management activities at the landfill are brush chipping, used tire baling, metal collection for recycling and transfer of bulky waste to a regional landfill.

In order to continue to provide disposal services to Precinct 3 residents, a vertical expansion of the landfill is proposed that will extend the landfill life for about 5 years. At that time, the County expects to have a new regional landfill permitted by TCEQ and ready for operation. The vertical expansion of the current landfill has the following benefits:

- The County will continue to provide essential waste disposal service at the familiar landfill location, which promotes public health for County residents and reduces illegal dumping,
- A new Citizen Convenience Station that trucks waste to a regional landfill will not be needed as a replacement for the closed landfill. The Citizen Convenience Station cannot provide the range of disposal services currently available at the landfill,



3 December 2009

Page 2

- The County will not pay \$25,000 per month for regional landfill and tire disposal fees since the waste is disposed at the current landfill,
- No capital or operating cost increases are required for the extended operating life,
- Landfill closure can occur gradually over the next 5 years as sections of the landfill are filled. The County will be able to install the final soil cover over the waste as part of its routine operations at less cost, and
- The regional waste disposal capacity is increased, which provides additional time for new landfills to be put into operation in the Rio Grande Valley area.

The expansion will increase the landfill height up to 10 feet over approximately nine acres of the landfill. The highest point of the landfill will rise 27 feet above the surrounding natural ground. Because this area already contains a liner and in-place waste, no special development or operating costs are required to dispose of additional waste over the next five years. Routine operations can continue.

To expand the landfill, an amendment to the landfill permit is required from TCEQ. The amendment process generally takes about a year. The County's engineer, Cook-Joyce, Inc, will initiate preparation of the expansion design under the current engineering services contact, and it is expected that the amendment application can be submitted by April 2010. Any revisions that are required during the review process can be produced by the engineer in conjunction with other routine landfill engineering services contained in a new 2010 contract. As the landfill is filled to its current design capacity in early 2010, the County will request a temporary authorization to place additional waste in the landfill during the TCEQ amendment approval process.