

## August 27, 2009 -- Bay Area Waste Feared on Both Sides of State Line

KOLO TV, Reno

A California company is seeking permission to build a landfill in the desert west of Winnemucca.

The landfill would take in thousands of tons of waste every day from the Bay Area and it's facing rising opposition from Humboldt County residents.

The proposal is to haul the waste to this remote spot in the desert west of Winnemucca and over decades build something like the company's Ostrom Road Waste Site in Yuba County in California's Central Valley--an artificial hill growing as each day as much as a thousand tons of waste is brought here from Yuba, Sutter and other foothill counties, compacted and covered.

Before it was built there was resistance in the nearby town of Wheatland, but it's hard to find complaints there about the waste site today.

"Since we've been in operation since 1995 we believe we've been a good neighbor," says Recology's Vice President and General Manager for Landfills. "We've managed all the potential issues related to a landfill."

In fact, state inspections in the past few years have noted occasional issues of concern but few violations of California regulations.

What does worry some here is what might be coming in the future--a worry they share with many 200 miles away in Winnemucca.

"We were concerned when they were building it that they would be looking to contract to start taking garbage from outside the county," says longtime Yuba County resident Jack Gilbert.

And now?

"And now that seems to have come to fruition. We don't want to be San Francisco's garbage disposal."

That's right. This landfill could be seeing Bay Area waste soon. In fact it may delay any potential shipment to Nevada by years, even decades. But in Wheatland, as in Winnemucca, there's a "not in my backyard" reaction growing.

"The repose I've gotten from constituents in the Wheatland area has been pretty solidly, 'it's their garbage. Why are we going to take care of it for them,'"

says Roger Abe who represents the Wheatland area on the county Board of Supervisors.

Abe says if the idea comes before the board he'll likely listen to those concerns. His counterpart up in Winnemucca, Humboldt County Commissioner Tom Fransway, has been listening to his community, doing his own research and reaching similar conclusions.

"The more I look at it the more I'm convinced it's not a good fit for our community."

Fransway says he's familiar with Jungo Flat and its weather extremes and thinks it's the wrong location for a landfill. He's also concerned about what it would do to the county's image. "It wouldn't help."

But it's unclear whether either community could stop the importation of waste from the Bay Area. The Yuba County site has been in operation for 14 years and its permit allows Recology to triple its intake.

The Jungo Flat landfill received a conditional special use permit from the Humboldt County regional planning commission two years ago. It still needs permits from state environmental officials, but so far it's been getting an OK. F

Finally, both states permit the importation of waste from other areas. In fact., Recology President and CEO Mike Sangiacomo says there's nothing new about the idea. "There are quite a number of large landfills in the state of Nevada. Some of them take material from across state lines already."

That's right, among the trucks arriving each day at the Lockwood landfill just east of Sparks are some carrying waste from the Sacramento area. They've been arriving here for years.

The difference, of course, is that Lockwood has a long history. Jungo Flat is virgin desert located in rural Nevada which has reason to feel it has been often misunderstood and undervalued.

Taking someone else's garbage in their backyard just feels wrong. Winnemucca resident turned anti-landfill advocate Tami Vetter puts it simply. "This is my home. It's not someone's garbage dump."

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