

## PRESS RELEASE

### **Proposed Waste Transfer Station Is Costly And Unnecessary, Report Shows**

*County Could Save Millions By Using Private Providers And Existing Area Waste Transfer Stations*

ORANGE COUNTY, NC -- The progressive community group, Orange County Voice, has released a report to the Orange County Board of County Commissioners suggesting that a waste transfer station is not needed. The report, which is available at [www.OrangeCountyVoice.org](http://www.OrangeCountyVoice.org), compares standard vendor prices for disposing waste verses anticipated costs to build and operate the county's new facility.

The report is in direct contradiction to repeated claims by the board that trash will pile up if the county doesn't act quickly. Last month the board voted to site a \$7-10 million waste transfer station in the southwest corner of the county-- far away from interstates, industrial areas and the major sources of waste generation in Chapel Hill, Carrboro, Hillsborough, as well as the growth areas in Efland and Mebane.

The report indicates that vendors charge \$40-\$50 per ton to dispose of waste using facilities that are already in place. Two vendors operate waste transfer facilities in Durham and have expressed willingness to use those facilities for Orange County's waste on a monthly or yearly basis.

Private providers' cost to dispose of waste, \$40 - \$50 per ton, stands in stark contrast to estimates for Orange County to perform the same services-- \$47 - \$62 per ton. "That might not sound like a lot, but when we're talking about 240 tons of waste generated per day, six days a week, we're talking about millions of dollars in potential savings," explains Hauser. "Those millions of dollars in taxpayer savings could be used to hire more teachers and fix our schools."

"One of the key differences in the county's costs versus vendor costs is that the vendor facilities cost between \$1 - 2 million to build verses Orange County's plan for a \$5 - 7 million facility. The discrepancy in cost results from the fact that the county is planning to site its transfer station in a rural forest that lacks water and sewer services. Water and wastewater will have to be trucked into and out of the remote facility on a routine basis. Special water and waste-water capture and storage features will also have designed for the building. Because of the station's remoteness, municipalities will incur extra off-the-balance-sheet costs, such as increased staffing drive times, diesel fuel, the purchase of new higher speed trucks and rural road maintenance.

Another major cost discrepancy results from the fact that the county is purchasing 143 acres of land that comes with an asking price of \$3 million. "Orange County is building a Cadillac of a waste transfer station on land the size of a golf course," adds Tony Blake, another spokesperson for Orange County Voice. "Not only are we wasting taxpayer money in the midst of a financial crisis, we are limiting our options for the future. We are causing irreversible harm to our rural landscape when we could be taking advantage of the massive capital investments that waste-disposal vendors have already made all around us."

Orange County Voice also points out that the cost for the waste transfer station will increase over time. According to a Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization report

in 2007, the northeastern part of the county will see the most rapid increase in population as we head toward 2035. "The county's waste generation and the proposed transfer station will become farther apart as the county grows," explains Blake.

The group's report assumes that Orange County will operate the waste transfer station for 20 years. Commissioners Barry Jacobs and Steve Yuhaz have indicated that the waste transfer station is only an "interim solution." If the County closes its new facility in 10 years, then the county's costs rise to \$52 -\$70 per ton and possibly more. "Why not consider outsourcing on an interim basis to find a better site and start the county on the path to truly sustainable waste management solutions, such as waste-to-energy? That would certainly be better than tying up the county's limited resources on an expensive interim project," says Hauser.

The county's decision to build its own waste transfer station will also likely zap local municipal taxpayers and the state. Municipalities will now have to drive 23 miles roundtrip to access the county's rural transfer site. The state will likely have to spend taxpayer dollars to widen Highway 54 to accommodate the newly added 100 to 300 garbage trucks per day traveling at 40 mph. "If you think Highway 54's congestion is bad now, just add a couple hundred slow-moving garbage trucks. Truck traffic peaks at rush hour which is the end of the collection day," explains Hauser.

Because half of the local municipalities currently outsource their collections—many to the same private disposal companies that would work with the county—greater efficiencies and savings are possible. "When you look at all the advantages that private providers could deliver --and the irreversible fiscal, social and environmental losses that proposed waste transfer station will create -- it is clear that the Commissioners should halt the process on or before their meeting on January 22. Not only do we lose millions of dollars, we devastate the land and community that we all have invested to protect."

### **PRESS RESOURCES AND CONTACTS**

Orange County Voice's Report:

<http://www.orangecountyvoice.org/images/WTSAlternativesCosts.pdf>

Bonnie Hauser: 732-9316, [orangecountyvoice@aol.com](mailto:orangecountyvoice@aol.com)

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Orange County's estimate for building waste transfer station (\$5 – 7 million):

<http://server3.co.orange.nc.us:8088/weblink7/DocView.aspx?id=9905>

See passage that reads: "There will be substantial costs to the County in the overall land acquisition, design and development of a selected site and the permitting and construction of the actual facility along with any ancillary features the BOCC may authorize. Preliminary estimates for the transfer station alone, separate from land purchase, range from \$5-7 million."

Also, see attached Solid Waste Capital Needs document which shows the waste transfer site as costing an estimated \$6,378,750 before land acquisition.

Cost of land (\$3 million): See attached letter from Howell to County Commissioners and <http://www.chapelhillnews.com/news/story/31047.html>

Note that GIS records show that the land is valued at \$748,201; County tax records show it was purchased two years ago at \$750,000.

Waste disposal vendor contact information and estimates: See page 10 of this report: [www.orangecountyvoice.org/images/Resources\\_R\\_1-6.pdf](http://www.orangecountyvoice.org/images/Resources_R_1-6.pdf)

Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization Growth Estimates: <http://townhall.townofchapelhill.org/agendas/2007/03/05/7/>

Map Of Orange County's Growth: <http://citizenwill.org/2007/03/09/2035-orange-countys-garbage-center-of-gravity/>

Letter introducing the report to commissioners: Attached; Letter to Commissioners

Original Site Criteria (5-6 acres; near I-40/I-85; near trash generation): Attached; Solid Waste Advisory Board document