



Public Works Department

San Juan County

915 Spring St • P. O. Box 729 • (360) 370-0500 www.sanjuanco.com
Friday Harbor, WA 98250 • Fax (360) 378-6405 email: pubwks@sjcpbublicworks.org

Letter of Transmittal

Date: October 13, 2011

To: The San Juan County Council **From:** Ed Hale, Utilities Manager
Subject: First Review Draft Solid and
Hazardous Waste Management Plan

For Your Information **For Review** **Please Comment**

The attached document is a first review draft of the Comprehensive Solid and Hazardous Waste Management Plan for San Juan County (SW Plan). This draft SW Plan has two primary functions. One is to provide information to the public regarding the nature of the solid waste systems that residents will use with and without the proposed solid waste user charge. The second function is to establish the legal basis for implementing the new solid waste system.

This draft contains only the three chapters that present the system operations, which are the core of the plan, and the three chapters that provide the background and basis for the Plan.

The County solid waste system has experienced significant changes in the last few years. Facilities have been modified, hours of operation have been reduced, days of operation have been changed, staffing has been reduced, services have been cut, tipping fees have increased, and new fees have been added and then modified. These changes have been short-term measures, intended to help balance the solid waste budget. While each has improved the County's financial situation to some extent, rates remain high, and services have been reduced.

The County Council has proposed an initiative intended to provide a stable revenue source that can be used to return previous services, provide funding for facility improvements, and reduce tipping fees. This revenue source is officially referred to as the Solid Waste User Charge.

The Solid Waste User Charge is a fee charged to each land parcel owner in the unincorporated portion of the County. The amount of the fee varies based on the type of use, residential or commercial. Most residential properties will be charged \$100 per year. Commercial use properties will be charged according to the specific business type and in proportion to the square footage of the building. Residents and businesses will also pay tipping fees when they bring waste to the County facility, as they do now, but at a reduced rate. The estimated reduced rate is \$175/ton by 2013, as compared to today's self haul tipping fee of \$355/ton.

All solid waste systems in Washington must operate according to an approved solid waste plan.

October 13, 2011

This draft describes two possible systems.

- Plan A describes the solid waste system that would be implemented if the solid waste user charge is approved. Plan A includes:
 - Restored services based on those available in January of 2010.
 - Repair and modification of solid waste facilities to meet state regulatory requirements.
 - Increased public access hours.
 - Facility traffic flow improvements.
 - Eventual return to a transfer station operation on San Juan Island.
 - Establishing an emergency reserve fund.
 - Extending some services to non ferry-served islands.

- Plan B describes the solid waste program that would be implemented if the fee is rejected. Plan B includes:
 - Collection of recyclable materials, as well as garbage, by the franchised hauler.
 - Closing all County solid waste facilities.
 - Offering use of the County facilities to private operations through a request for proposals (RFP).

The draft SW Plan does not draw conclusions. It describes the solid waste system that we have today and what we can expect under the two possible scenarios.

The collection and transfer of solid waste is the portion of the system that residents and businesses commonly experience first-hand. Chapters 5 and 6 describe how collection and transfer facilities will differ in the two scenarios. These are the chapters that are likely to be of greatest interest to the reader and offer the information most significant to the average system user.

Chapters 1 through 3 provide background information regarding the current solid waste system and the requirements for a revised and updated plan. Chapter 7 describes the expected disposal and processing operations.

Chapter 4 and Chapters 8 through 10 will be released with the second draft of the County SW Plan. The second draft of the plan will include a robust description of County waste reduction and recycling programs, and the education and administrative activities needed to support the chosen solid waste system. It will also contain the revised Hazardous Waste Management Plan

Whatever the outcome of the election may be, the County must have an adopted, approved plan in place to legally implement any system. The content of this draft of the SW Plan has been limited to information considered helpful to the decision-making process for the upcoming election. Much of the information required to meet state standards for plan content has been left out for now, to avoid distraction. After the election, a second draft will be released that will include more of the State-required information and focus on the steps necessary for implementation of the chosen operations model: Plan A or Plan B.

CC: Pete Rose