



King County

Department of
Natural Resources and Parks
Solid Waste Division

Follow Up Message to Neighbors about the Bio Energy Washington Landfill Gas-to-Energy Facility

Jan. 25, 2011

Dear Cedar Hills Landfill Neighbor:

The King County Solid Waste Division (SWD), which operates the Cedar Hills Regional Landfill, hosted a community meeting on Nov. 16, 2010. Bio Energy Washington (BEW), the company that owns and operates the landfill gas-to-energy facility at the landfill was invited to attend. King County has a contract with BEW to generate energy from landfill gas. The purpose of the community meeting was to address concerns about noise from the BEW facility.

This letter includes a meeting summary, next steps, and contact information. For future updates, please visit the King County Solid Waste Division and BEW websites. (Contact info on back.)

Meeting summary

Primary concerns voiced from neighbors (thirty neighbors signed in at the meeting)

- The noise is described as “a constant humming sound”, “a giant oscillating fan” and “bothersome.” The type of sound is a concern. Noise tends to be more noticeable at night.
- A coordinated reporting and response effort is needed from all of the odor and noise-generating entities in the community.
- Noise measurement data should be made available, and facility tours should be offered.

Response from Charles Packard, CEO of INGENCO, parent company of BEW

- It has taken longer than expected to get the facility running. This has made it more difficult to measure and mitigate noise.
- Early in 2010, BEW took steps to reduce the whistling, groaning and hissing sounds emanating from the landfill gas facility. BEW heard feedback from some neighbors that those steps significantly reduced noise. However, BEW recently heard that even this lower level of noise is still an issue.
- Additional noise mitigation equipment has been ordered and will be installed shortly.
- After additional mitigation measures are in place, BEW’s sound consultant will take another round of readings to quantify effectiveness. Measurements will again be taken at the plant perimeter, the landfill property boundary and additional sites in the community.
- “Elective” noise producing activities will be avoided at night. However, the plant is a 24-hour facility and processes gas 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.
- The gas process is cyclic with various repetitive sounds. BEW’s goal is to make these sounds less discernible to neighbors, and to the extent possible, get rid of the oscillating noise and get closer to a steady state sound level.
- Having “no sound” is not a reasonable goal. BEW is continuing efforts to operate the landfill gas facility in compliance with the county’s noise ordinance, and BEW will attempt to continue to reduce noise so BEW meets a self imposed good neighbor standard.
- BEW will put noise measurement information on the BEW website.

- Many people have toured the landfill gas facility and the sound mitigation measures already implemented. Additional facility tours can be arranged.
- At the County's invitation, BEW will send a representative to future Solid Waste Division community meetings.

Response from Kevin Kiernan, King County Solid Waste Division (SWD) Director

- SWD will look into establishing a coordinated reporting and response effort with the noise and odor generating entities in the neighborhood. The viability of this effort depends on the willingness of others to participate.
- SWD investigates noise and odor complaints received and gets back to people. For the fastest service, call SWD. See contact information below.
- SWD will talk with other agencies about reporting non-landfill originating odors.
- SWD is conducting noise evaluations, which are still in progress; no results yet.
- SWD will hold at least two community meetings a year; BEW is encouraged to attend.
- SWD is proud of the Cedar Hills Regional Landfill; call or email SWD to request a tour.

Next steps

Bio Energy Washington

- Complete installation of further noise reduction measures by 1st quarter 2011, and have the sound consultant take additional noise readings following their installation.
- Install a permanent weather station to record wind direction and a permanent sound monitoring station at the plant by 1st quarter 2011. In addition, BEW will procure portable sound recording stations which can be deployed at various places around the area. The monitoring and weather stations will help BEW determine whether sounds heard in the area are being caused by changes in plant activity or other factors.
- Update BEW website with noise measurement data by 1st quarter 2011.
- Attend future Cedar Hills community meetings to talk with neighbors. (ongoing)

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- Look into establishing a coordinated reporting and response effort with other area businesses to address neighborhood odor and noise concerns. (1st quarter 2011).
- Discuss the reporting of non-landfill related odors with other agencies (1st quarter 2011).
- Schedule and notify neighbors of next Cedar Hills community meeting (1st quarter 2011).
- Update the project website, include noise evaluation findings (1st quarter 2011).

Contact information - to report concerns, arrange tours, view project updates

Bio Energy Washington: 425-392-3918. (Message line) If you know noise is coming from BEW's facility, call BEW first. Provide detailed information including your name, phone number, address, date, time, and description of the situation. BEW's plant manager will follow up with you.
Website: <http://www.bioenergy-wa.com/index.htm>. To access specific information about BEW's facility at Cedar Hills, go to "Login", User name: "bioguest", Password: "BEWplnt9"

King County Solid Waste Division: 206-296-4490 (Answered 24/7) If you're not sure where noise is coming from, contact the Solid Waste Division. Call for fastest service.
Website: www.kingcounty.gov/solidwaste Click on "Contact Us" to send an email. **For future project updates, click on "Landfills" and then "Landfill gas-to-energy facility."**

Alternate formats provided upon request. Call 206-296-4490, TTY Relay: 711