



Thursday, March 16, 2006

Marco Gonzalez
Coast Law Group
169 Saxony Road Suite 201
Encinitas CA 92024

RE: Tajiguas Landfill, Santa Barbara County

Dear Marco:

Enclosed are some Xeroxed materials from past Heal the Ocean newsletters re: our long, protracted battle(s) over Santa Barbara County's Tajiguas Landfill. Basically, we fought the expansion of Tajiguas, which we were not successful in doing, but many things happened in the process.

Here are the basics:

- Tajiguas is unlined, and there is groundwater mixing with the trash – our geologists said up to 100 feet of groundwater in the trash.
- County has admitted there is groundwater in the trash.
- The five-foot separation rule is not applicable (says RWQCB) if County can show it contains pollutants, that the pollution from landfill doesn't get offsite.
- County maintains there is no leachate/pollution getting offsite. That it's all being caught in a French-Drain trench – even though groundwater doesn't run neatly into this little V at the bottom of the Tajiguas canyon, according to our geologists (and Bob Hazard of the Gaviota Coast Conservancy, who can fill you in on this better than I can).
- We asked for a "curtain" of monitoring wells – particularly in southwest corner of the landfill where we knew the geology was such that groundwater could escape. But we didn't get that. The Regional Board had County could install six wells in some odd places, which went in by May 2004, and the wells had to be tested every three months. If pollution was detected in the wells, the Regional Board said it would expand its investigation of the problem. There was no pollution (of course) so the

County got to quit monitoring in a very short time (I believe it was six months).

- When it looked like we were getting somewhere, the County had our Geologists (Geosolv) reported to state Geology Board. Our guy (GeoSolv) was fined \$2,000 and given a “mark” on his license, and thus was scared off the case. (“See article “Trash the Public Process.”) Of course his report was not a \$2 million report so it was not accurate to five inches here or there. County played dirty.
- However, the last thing RWQCB told the County, before agreeing to expansion, was that the pollution/runoff through Pila Creek had to be controlled. During all the scuffle, the County Board of Supervisors agreed to monitor bacteria in Pila Creek once per month. This has been dropped.
- County Public Works maintains the pollution in the ocean at Arroyo Quemada (about a mile down the coast from the landfill, where seabirds roost) is from seabirds. So they hired a falconer to shoo the birds away, and now the bacteria is wonderfully gone from Arroyo Quemada (which was on South Coast’s worst polluted beach list – Heal the Bay tracked it). Yet this is down coast, and Pila Creek remains ignored, because no one lives there, swims there. Nobody monitors it – it is creek that runs through the landfill. It is tunneled underground, comes back up below the landfill. And it’s monstrously polluted and runs out to sea.
- The landfill expanded, but County admits “some day” it will have to be closed. During all this, the Board of Supervisors agreed that the landfill would close in 15 years (by 2017) even with expansion. They voted on it and this passed unanimously. We (HTO and Gaviota Coast Conservancy) want to see this thing closed, capped, or preferably – cleaned up. It’s a mess.
- Enclosed are the test results we ordered up on Pila Creek. FGL is a reputable lab, used by the County itself.
 - Samples taken on Feb. 28, 2006:
 - >1600 total coliform
 - >1600 fecal coliform
 - >24,193 enterococcus
 - Samples taken on January 3, 2006:
 - >1600 total coliform
 - >1600 fecal coliform
 - >24,193 enterococcus
 - >5700 for Heterotrophic bacteria (together with FGL note that they would provide "guidance on well cleanup.")

This is definitely off the charts. Bobby will have tons more detail (and his knowledge is far better than mine). But that’s the background of this whole mess. Thanks!



Hillary Hauser, executive director
HEAL THE OCEAN