

September 27, 2006

Mr. Derek Pohle, PE
Director of Public Works
124 Enterprise St. S.E.
Ephrata, WA. 98823

RE: Grant County Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan TG-061359

Dear Mr. Pohle:

The Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (commission) has completed its review of the preliminary draft of the Grant County Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan Update (Plan).

Commission staff's analysis of the Cost Assessment portion of the plan shows minimal financial impact to ratepayers served by regulated solid waste collection companies in Grant County. The Plan calls for tip fee increases in 2006-2009 ranging from \$25.80-\$43 per ton. Residential customers would see an increase ranging from \$.11 to \$.85 per month and commercial customers would see an increase per yard of \$.53 to \$4.26 based on the projected tip fee increases.

Please see the attached commission staff comments for consideration. We hope that you find our review and suggestions helpful. Please direct questions or comments about the commission's plan review process to Ms. Penny Hansen at (360) 664-1242 or by email at phansen@wutc.wa.gov.

Sincerely,

Carole J. Washburn
Executive Secretary

Attachment

cc: James Wavada, Department of Ecology, Eastern Regional Office
Cullen Stephenson, Solid Waste and Financial Assistance Program Manager
Ms. Joan Melvin, Grant County Solid Waste

Attachment: Grant County Solid Waste Management Plan Update TG-061359

Commission staff comments for consideration:

- Page 7; starting with the paragraph stating “The WUTC has certain responsibilities” – suggest that you replace with:
 - a. The WUTC is responsible to regulate solid waste collection haulers rates and services pursuant to Chapter 81.77 RCW.
- Page 23-27; consider changing the different colors of font unless the final version will be printed in color. We found the charts hard to read.
- Page 48, Section 4.6.3; if the County implements a minimum service level ordinance that requires a county-wide residential curbside organics collection program, there will be a cost impact to regulated haulers and their ratepayers.
- Page 52, Section 5.2 Regulatory Framework; in the first paragraph, the last sentence states, “Chapter 81.80 RCW authorizes regulation of commercial recyclable collection.” The commission regulates only insurance and safety requirements for common carriers under Chapter 81.80 RCW. The federal government defined the collection and transportation of recyclables from drop boxes or commercial establishments as property under Chapter 81.80 RCW. In the Federal Aviation Administration Authorization Act of 1994 (Effective 1/1/95) Congress preempted states and local governments from regulating the routes, rates, and services of commercial recycling (property). Recyclables from residences were excluded from that preemption.
- Page 52, Section 5.2 Regulatory Framework; in the second paragraph, last sentence states, “The WUTC grants a company a designated service area (district) based on...” Please delete all references to the term district while referring to a WUTC regulated haulers certificated service territory. Staff believes the term “district” could be confusing since county governments have the authority to establish a solid waste collection district. Staff suggests you use “certificated service territory” when referring to a regulated hauler’s territory.
- Page 53, Section 5.3.2; in the paragraph starting with “Sunrise Disposal Inc.,” the plan describes solid waste collection companies holding a “franchise.” The commission issues Certificates of Public Convenience and Necessity. Please change all references from “franchise” to “certificate” or “certificated” as it relates to regulated haulers.
- Page 56, Table 5-2; the rates listed for Consolidated Disposal Service, Inc., have changed to: 1 can (weekly) \$8.20; 60 gallon (monthly) \$7.30; 60 gallon (every other week) \$8.95; 60 gallon (weekly) \$14.50; and 90 gallon (weekly) \$16.95. Also, the associated footnotes seemed to have dropped off. The first footnote is there but footnotes 3 and 4 are missing. Staff verified the rates listed for the other companies listed in Table 5-2 and found the rates to be correct.
- Page 93, Section 11.2.1; in the second paragraph where it states, “WUTC regulates commercial recyclable collection (Chapter 81.80 RCW),” please change that to read “the WUTC regulates only insurance and safety requirements for the collection and transportation of commercial recycling under Chapter 81.80 RCW.”