

To: Sebastopol City Council (via email: citycouncil@cityofsebastopol.gov)

From: Woody Hastings

Date: January 5th, 2025

Subject: City Council Meeting of January 7, 2025 – Agenda Item 8: Consideration of Approval of Solid Waste Collection Agreement with Sonoma County Resource Recovery for garbage, recycling, and organic waste collection services

Dear Mayor Zollman and Sebastopol City Councilmembers:

I'm writing to respectfully urge you, at your council meeting on January 7, to choose Option 3 among the options presented by staff: "*Do not authorize execution of the Agreement with SCRR and provide other direction to Staff.*" Other direction to staff should be to renew a contract with Recology.

While I think it was the right thing to do to open this contract up to competition, and while I recognize and appreciate the work of the staff, the council ad hoc committee, and others who have spent a lot of time working on this, I think the city would be making a mistake by ending its relationship with Recology.

My comments are from the perspective of good governance and best practices in the arena of integrated solid waste management, not as a customer, as I'm a resident in the 95472 zip code but not within city limits, so I do not pay for waste & recycling services in the City.

Sonoma County-based MRF. I have visited many material recovery facilities (MRFs) over time due to the fact that my professional work between 1989 and 1996 was focused on integrated solid waste management. This past June, 2024, I visited the Recology MRF at 3417 Standish Ave in Santa Rosa. I was very impressed. In my opinion it is a state-of-the-art facility and appears to be very well run. I'm concerned that Sonoma County Resource Recovery (SCRR) does not have a MRF within Sonoma County, so must haul material over longer distances, increasing emissions.

"Renewable" Diesel. The fact that SCRR uses "renewable" diesel (RD) to haul those long distances is nothing special and not much of a benefit to the environment or human health. According to the CA Air Resources Board, 65% of diesel sold in California is "renewable," so SCRR is not stretching much. RD is a combustion fuel with negative impacts on both ambient air quality and global greenhouse gas emissions. Furthermore, the feedstocks for RD include vegetable oils such as soy and canola oil that compete with food crops, thus raising food prices, and play a role in ecosystem destruction. We need fleet electrification, not "renewable" combustion fuels.

Erosion of good governance standards. This past November 5, Windsor voters correctly rejected Measure Q, a ballot measure *championed by SCRR*, which has had its hauling contract in Windsor since 2017. Measure Q would have eroded a longstanding and fundamental standard of good governance – competitive bidding. The measure would have allowed the

“Town Council to approve agreements for solid waste collection services for a term longer than ten years without competitive bidding.” This blatant attempt to lock-in their contract without any competition is a blaring alarm bell that should be enough to convince Sebastopol city leaders that SCRR is not to be trusted.

Labor standards. The evaluation criteria and table on page 3 “Proposal Evaluation Scores” omit labor standards as a criterion. Recology is an employee-owned company unionized within the Teamsters Union. SCRR is not unionized at all. Contracting with SCRR would be a huge step in the wrong direction in terms of labor standards.

Rates and rate structure. The matrices that depict rates beginning on page 5 of the staff report omit the recycling and composting rates. Why? Because Recology’s rates for recycling and composting are lower than SCRR’s and when you add it all up Recology will cost less for most customers. I am convinced that SCRR will significantly *increase* the total service rates for nearly all commercial and multi-family customers by wrongly raising rates for recycling and composting services, which, along with simply being a higher rate, disincentivizes recycling and composting within the curbside system. Recology’s proposed rates are lower for the majority of residential customers in Sebastopol, with a less expensive per-month rate for the most common 32-gallon garbage cart.

In a wide variety of community events, projects, and affairs in which I have been engaged over the years in Sebastopol, Recology has been a solid partner and collaborator as a very present and integral part of the Sebastopol Community. This is something I don’t want to lose.

I’m perplexed as to why the City wants to end its relationship with Recology. Nothing in the staff report summarizes any significant problems with Recology to the extent that it would necessitate such a change. There is nothing about the SCRR contract, including in the “New and Enhanced Services for Customers and the Community” bullet list that is very compelling.

I urge the City Council to hit the pause button on this, not approve the SCRR contract, and reconsider remaining with Recology and extending a contract with them beyond June 30, 2025.

Respectfully Submitted,

Woody Hastings

Sebastopol, 95472

Sebastopol Climate Action Committee, 2020-2022

Certificated Course in Integrated Municipal Solid Waste Management, UCLA Extension, 1989