



COUNTY OF INYO

Administrative Services
163 May Street
Bishop, California 93514

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FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT: CHUCK HAMILTON, 760-873-5577

Solid Waste Fees Go Up July 1, Current Operating Schedules, Services Remain the Same

Fees at Inyo County's solid waste disposal facilities will increase on July 1, 2011, but the facilities' current schedules and hours of operation will remain the same, and there will be no reduction of staff or services at any of the county's Solid Waste Facilities.

The Inyo County Board of Supervisors approved the higher fees after holding numerous public meetings throughout the county. Residents at the meetings, and those who provided input through online and in-person surveys indicated they were willing to pay more to use the landfills in return for keeping the current, convenient operating schedules and maintaining existing hours of operation and levels of service.

Even with the increased fees, residents of Inyo County will still be paying less for residential curb-side trash service and using the landfills than residents in neighboring towns and counties.

The cost of the gate fee at all county operated solid waste disposal facilities will increase to \$5, from the current \$2 for dumping 3 cubic yards of general residential waste. There will be no fee for dropping off recyclable material.

Commercial waste haulers who provide residential curb side trash pickup and commercial trash service will see several new charges. The franchise fee they pay will increase from 5 percent to 10 percent of their annual revenue, and they will also be charged a new fee of \$3 a cubic yard for the compacted waste they deposit at county solid waste disposal facilities.

The average residential bill for a month of curbside service could increase by about \$4, or roughly a dollar week. Currently, an average monthly bill for curbside pickup is about \$14.60, and the new fee structure will require commercial waste haulers to charge \$18.79 a month.

That fee, for comparison, is still about 30 percent less than what residents of Mono County and the Town of Mammoth Lakes pay for the same service. In addition, the new gate fee and other charges at Inyo County facilities are lower than those charged at landfills in neighboring San Bernardino, Mono and Kern counties.

Residents and businesses should check with their waste hauler for information about the exact amount of any different fees charged for the range of services provided by each waste hauling company.

There will also be a modest increase in the fees charged at Inyo County landfills for such items as furniture, tires, boats, tree stumps, yard waste, mobile homes and other large items or waste that requires special handling. The cost to dispose of construction and demolition waste at the landfills will increase to \$14 a cubic yard, up from the current \$9.

A full list of the new fees has been posted at each solid waste disposal facility and is also posted on the Inyo County Integrated Waste Management website, at www.inyocountysolidwaste.com.

The new fees and charges are necessary to cover the costs of the county's Integrated Waste Management Program, which operates the county's solid waste disposal facilities. In fiscal year 2010-11 the department's budget was \$2.5 million. However, revenues fell short of expenses by about \$600,000, with the county using General Fund money to cover the difference. The program was facing deficit spending, as costs rose to comply with a complex set of state and federal regulations.

Before deciding on the new fees, the Integrated Waste Program held public meetings in Independence, Lone Pine and Bishop, presented two public workshops to the Board of Supervisors, and conducted an online survey and also surveyed residents and businesses using the county's solid waste disposal facilities.

The overwhelming message from those public meetings was that people were willing keep the Solid Waste Program in the black by paying more to use local landfills instead of cutting staff, or reducing services and operating hours at the facilities. One option that was soundly rejected was increasing the current one-half-percent sales tax dedicated to Solid Waste management.