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Butte County Clarifies Recent Fine from Environmental Protection Agency

News Release

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Contact: Bill Mannel (530) 879-2350

Oroville, CA – Butte County officials clarified today that the fine levied by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in 2004 was the result of reporting errors at the Neal Road Landfill and not for air quality standards of the Clean Air Act. The EPA alleged that the County did not meet certain reporting submittals and timelines for plans and monitoring data for a landfill gas collection and control system. In fact, the County installed gas collection and controlled system before the required deadline but did so prior to submitting test results to the EPA showing the need for such a system.

In 1998, the County conducted a study to determine if emissions for non-methane organic compounds at the landfill exceeded federal thresholds that would trigger the need to install a landfill gas collection and control system. The results indicated that levels were significantly less than the threshold; in fact, emissions were projected to be less than the threshold for several years into the future.

Federal regulations required another study be conducted five years later in 2003. The County requested EPA waive the requirement but did not receive a response. Before completing the test, however, the County went ahead and installed a landfill gas collection and control system. “The County was being proactive in destroying greenhouse gases earlier than the EPA would have required,” said Bill Mannel, Solid Waste Manager for Butte County. “The EPA fined the County in 2004 because we went ahead and installed systems instead of performing the study. Had the study indicated a need to install a gas collection system, the EPA would have required it be installed in 2005”

It should be noted that the County continues to be proactive in using renewable energy sources to create electricity. In addition to the 1.14 megawatt solar project installed at the main County campus in Oroville, the County is actively pursuing a plan to use the gases generated from the Neal Road Landfill to generate 4.3 megawatts of electricity.



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