

**CITY OF OAKLAND  
COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT**

TO: Office of the City Manager  
ATTN: Robert C. Bobb  
FROM: Public Works Agency  
DATE: June 19, 2001

RE: A FOLLOW-UP REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR, PUBLIC WORKS  
AGENCY REGARDING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DIOXIN  
RESOLUTION

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**SUMMARY**

On February 2, 1999, the City Council passed Resolution No. 74773 C.M.S. to encourage the elimination of dioxin emissions and to direct staff to work with other governmental agencies to create a regional task force to identify sources of dioxin and develop pollution prevention strategies. Implementation of the resolution helps achieve Priority Objective #7 (to identify, plan, and solve urban environmental and social issues that impact the health and quality of life in Oakland). This is an informational report providing an update on staff's progress in implementing the resolution.

**FISCAL IMPACTS**

Staff costs to participate in the regional task force are currently being funded by the Clean Water Program.

**BACKGROUND**

Following the adoption of Resolution No. 74773 C.M.S., the City Council unanimously voted on July 27, 1999 to request that the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) consider passage of a dioxin elimination resolution and to seek financial contributions from its member agencies to fund a regional task force. On September 16, 1999, ABAG Executive Board adopted Resolution 17-99, which authorized ABAG staff to work with local governments to convene and assemble the San Francisco Bay Area Dioxin Task Force (Task Force). The goal of the Task Force is to:

- Pool local governments' knowledge and resources to study the problems of dioxin and recommend possible solutions or actions for local governments around the San Francisco Bay;
- Coordinate efforts with state, federal and regional agencies working on dioxin pollution; and

  
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- Conduct public outreach to community groups and the general public regarding new information on dioxin research and/or control measures.

In the last two years, Palo Alto, the Port of Oakland, the City and County of San Francisco, Marin County and Berkeley have joined the City of Oakland in passing dioxin resolutions and are members of the Task Force.

## **KEY ISSUES AND IMPACTS**

### **San Francisco Bay Area Dioxin Task Force**

The Task Force released a draft report, in December 2000, titled "Screening Evaluation of Dioxin Pollution Prevention Options." The purpose of the report was to identify potentially feasible actions that can be taken by local governments to reduce and/or eliminate dioxin.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), has provided the Task Force with a pollution prevention grant to contract with the Center for Environmental Health of Oakland (Center) to provide information to local governments, regulatory agencies, and community groups on dioxin-related issues. The Center is also serving as a community liaison for the Task Force. During April 2001, the Center hosted a series of public meetings to receive public input on the Report.

Over the next few months, the Task Force will be reviewing the input from the public and will be developing recommendations regarding which pollution prevention options should be implemented as demonstration projects. The USEPA has provided a \$40,000 grant to assist with the implementation of one or more of the identified pollution prevention options. Some of the options include:

- Increasing the amount of chlorine-free paper used, since paper bleaching creates a variety of chlorinated organic compounds. Pollution prevention options include encouraging and assisting municipalities to purchase chlorine free paper products.
- Substituting diesel engines with alternative fuel engines such as natural gas and biodiesel.
- Replacing polyvinyl chloride (PVC) products with PVC-free alternatives, since dioxins are formed and released during PVC manufacture and structural fires. Pollution prevention options include purchasing PVC-free products for building construction, interior furnishing, packaging, office supplies, and vehicle parts.
- Reducing the amount of wood burning. Pollution prevention options include changes in current City policy on fireplace construction in new and remodeled residences (such as encouraging or requiring natural gas fireplaces and EPA-certified wood stoves) as well as educating the community about better wood burning practices.

- Addressing the problem of medical waste, since nationally, medical waste incinerators are major dioxin air emission sources and California's only commercial medical waste incinerator is located in Oakland. Pollution prevention options include reducing the volume of medical waste or identifying non-incineration disposal practices.

### **City of Oakland Implementation**

City staff has taken a number of steps to implement dioxin pollution prevention. The following is an update on the status of work in each major area.

Pesticides The Office of Parks and Recreation has eliminated broad leaf weed pesticides from use within the City. These pesticides have been eliminated since they release dioxins during their manufacture and use.

Paper The Purchasing Division in the Financial Services Agency has revised specifications to require that all paper provided to the City must be chlorine free and non-dioxin producing with a minimum of 30% post consumer recycled content.

Polyvinyl Chloride (PVC) The Purchasing Division continues to review contracts for materials made with PVC to determine if suitable replacement materials without PVC are feasible. The Purchasing Division and the Public Works Agency are currently testing some new traffic cones made with an alternative to PVC. If the cones hold up to the elements better than during previous tests, Purchasing will phase out the use of PVC traffic cones. PVC alternatives have also been incorporated into the Green Building information available at the City's permit counter.

The PWA-Design and Construction Services Department has eliminated the use of PVC pipe in sewer projects without a substantial cost to the City or to contractors. PWA-Environmental Services Division (PWA-ESD) has also begun an initiative to educate staff and encourage applicants to use alternatives to PVC pipe on private utility jobs.

Vehicles PWA-Equipment Services continues to convert a portion of the City's fleet to alternative fuel vehicles. This year, PWA-Equipment Services requisitioned seven compressed natural gas dump trucks. These units will replace seven units in the fleet that currently operate on diesel fuel.

It is not feasible to convert all vehicles to alternative fuels. Due to vehicle use at satellite locations (Shepherd Canyon, fire stations), lack of fueling stations make alternative fuel vehicles in these locations not practical. In these situations, existing diesel powered vehicles are being replaced with more fuel efficient diesel versions, which produce fewer emissions than vehicles currently in service.

PWA-ESD drafted an application to Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) for implementation of a compressed natural gas (CNG) garbage truck pilot project in West Oakland in partnership with the BAAQMD and Waste Management of

Alameda County. PWA-ESD has also worked with the Port to identify new CNG fueling stations within the downtown and Port areas.

Data Collection Limited data has been collected on air quality in the City of Oakland. PWA-ESD is working in partnership with the USEPA and the BAAQMD to implement a pilot project to install particulate and ozone monitors and a weather station at Castlemont High School in East Oakland. USEPA is donating over \$100,00 in equipment and technical services to the Oakland Unified School District. Castlemont students will learn how to operate the station and monitor Oakland's air quality.

PWA-ESD is also working with the BAAQMD to establish a permanent particulate (PM2.5) monitoring station in West Oakland. It is anticipated that BAAQMD will expand this station to also include full-spectrum air monitoring equipment. The Port of Oakland has agreed to maintain two additional particulate monitoring stations through 2004.

Under the California Air Resources Board Children's Environmental Health Protection Program a new monitoring station at the Lockwood Elementary School in the Fruitvale neighborhood is scheduled to begin this year. This station will monitor all criteria pollutants, including particulates and dioxin.

PWA-ESD is coordinating the West Oakland Air Quality Study to compile an inventory of diesel exhaust emission sources in West Oakland. The inventory will include both mobile and stationary sources of diesel exhaust and will be used to predict air quality impacts on the neighborhood.

Fishing PWA-ESD is coordinating with the Port of Oakland, the Alameda County Health Department, and the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board to ensure that proper signs warning of the dangers of dioxin in fish caught from San Francisco Bay are posted and maintained at fishing piers in the City of Oakland.

Medical Waste PWA-ESD participates in the Alameda County Public Health Department's local health care pollution prevention project which brings together government, community groups, environmental organizations, and the health care industry to work collaboratively on dioxin reduction in materials used by the health care industry and other types of pollution prevention.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL OPPORTUNITIES**

The City has an opportunity to continue to participate in a regional effort to reduce and or eliminate dioxin in the environment and reduce impacts to public health.

## **DISABILITY AND SENIOR CITIZEN ACCESS**

Implementation of the Dioxin Resolution will not have any impact on disability and senior access.

**ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

This is an informational report. No action is necessary.

Respectfully submitted,



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APPROVED AND FORWARDED TO  
THE PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE



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