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"Willa" there be an expansion?

Update on SECCRA's expansion proposal

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Editor

Current estimates place the Southeastern Chester County Refuse Authority (SECCRA) landfill, located in the far northeast corner of London Grove Township, at capacity by the end of 2010 or beginning of 2011

at the latest. This landfill takes the solid waste from 24 municipalities in southeastern Chester County.

To continue service at this site, an expansion project, called the Willa Expansion, has been proposed by SECCRA and approved by 23 of the 24 member municipalities. Only London Grove

Township, the host township, has not agreed to the expansion.

In Conditional-Use Hearings in London Grove Township, the expansion project was denied and two appeals by SECCRA at the Court of Common Pleas and Commonwealth Court upheld the decision.

To give the 90,000 households, whose trash is hauled to the landfill, uninterrupted service,

construction for the proposed expansion must begin in the spring of 2009. For construction to begin then, SECCRA must have its designs completed for the bid process by December 2008. There remains about six months of design to be completed; therefore this must be started by May 2008.

With two years left to go, it would seem like everything is on

schedule, but the project is stalled. SECCRA needs Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) approval of its expansion plans before it can finish the designs and receive all necessary permits. The DEP has suspended operations on the project until SECCRA comes to an agreement with London Grove Township.

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"The only thing we know for sure is that the trash is going to keep coming," said Bill Stullken, (SECCRA) general manager. "What we are going to do to continue to serve the community is unknown. There is no magic bullet to make it (the region's trash) go away."

"There are a variety of possibilities, and SECCRA is assessing its options if it has to fold its tent (in London Grove)," said Stullken. These options include using the landfill on Street Road as a transfer station for the area's solid waste, redesigning the current site using the existing footprint to gain a few extra years, restricting services, and/or building a new facility on a new site.

All of the options would cost all of the households in its member communities more money for trash removal. If the trash is hauled to another landfill, that will cost additional gas and time for the haulers. If SECCRA has to abandon its current site, new roads, buildings, and tests wells (among other things) would be required at the new site. According to SECCRA the most cost effective thing to do would be to expand at the site in London Grove Township.

"London Grove has to agree. Our job is to find a way to do that or modify what we are doing," said Stullken. "What we plan to do is exactly what we have been doing on this site for the last 20 years."

And what SECCRA has been doing for the past 20 years is be a model landfill that exceeds all the state and federal standards for landfill design, and uses state-of-the-art technology, to continually improve its landfill operation.