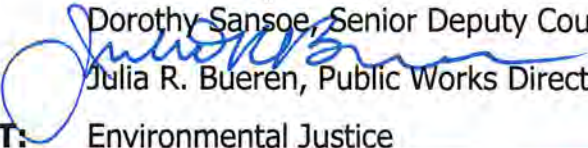


Memo

DATE: March 9, 2015

TO: Michael Kent, Executive Assistant to the Hazardous Materials Commission
Dorothy Sansoe, Senior Deputy County Administrator

FROM:  Julia R. Bueren, Public Works Director

SUBJECT: Environmental Justice

This is in response to your letter of January 5, 2015, concerning the implementation of the County's Environmental Justice policy by the Public Works Department. In general the Public Works Department prioritizes its projects, programs and services based on need and within our programs financial constraints. We work with our Board of Supervisors' offices in outreaching to communities to ensure our efforts are effective and inclusive. Responses to the specific questions in your letter are below.

1. What is the level of awareness about the requirements of the County's Environmental Justice Policy for your Department's staff?

Public Works was originally involved in with environmental justice issues in 2002 with training provided to County Departments, industry representatives and community members. The Department participated in a roundtable process to address illegal dumping. While illegal dumping occurs countywide, it was identified as an environmental justice issue as "hot spots" are often found in lower income communities or communities of color located near landfills or transfer stations. Through the efforts of the roundtable and working with the waste haulers, the landfills, transfer stations and the communities, protocols were put in place to address illegal dumping. The Board of Supervisors offices provided the link between the county departments and the impacted communities. While illegal dumping continues to be a problem, we have established lines of communication to address it. Mitigation funds have been directed at the effort and we also work with the community on organizing clean-up efforts. We have established an adopt-a-road program and we are working to transfer the responsibility for most illegal dumping to the waste haulers as part of the franchise agreements. This has been in place in North Richmond and recently expanded to the rest of West County in the Richmond Sanitary Services service area. We are working to expand this model countywide to provide a higher level of service in responding to illegal dumping than can be accomplished with the Public Works Department's budget constraints.

2. Does your Department have an Environmental Justice Coordinator who ensures the Department is following the Environmental Justice policy?

The Public Works Department does not have an identified Environmental Justice Coordinator. Each of the department's deputy directors takes responsibility for this within their program areas.

3. Does your Department have written department-specific procedures for implementing the Environmental Justice Policy?

The Public Works Department does not have its own environmental justice policy.

4. What do you see as the key Environmental Justice issues your Department has to address?

Illegal dumping and trash/litter.

5. How is the Environmental Justice policy applied in specific activities of your Department?

Most public works programs and projects are prioritized on a needs basis. For example, we are responsible for 670 road miles countywide. Our pavement management program evaluates every road on a three year cycle and we set priorities for projects based on need. We tend to group projects geographically for economic efficiency. We track illegal dumping complaints and monitor identified hot spots. We have done a study looking at trash in our unincorporated communities and have identified trash impacted communities to focus efforts of clean-ups as well as outreach and education to address the issue.

6. What difficulties do you see in implementing the Environmental Justice policy for your Department?

We are constrained by funding on how much we can do.

7. What are the opportunities for the public to engage in projects/programs/policies implemented by your Department? How do you make these opportunities consistent throughout the County, and how do you accommodate segments of the community with special needs in terms of their ability to engage?

We attend Municipal Advisory Committees as needed to present projects and programs in communities and to receive feedback. We work with the Board of Supervisors' offices to conduct project specific public meetings on projects and programs. We partner with non-profit organizations to conduct creek clean-ups. We look to our Board of Supervisors' offices for guidance on how to engage with each of their communities for broad and inclusive outreach.

8. How do you determine who are the members of the community with special needs in terms of their ability to engage?

We rely on our Board of Supervisors' offices to provide guidance on this and work with them to establish the most effective outreach to their communities.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you need more information or follow up.

JRB:mw
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c: M. Wara, Administrative Services