



County of Santa Cruz Board of Supervisors

Agenda Item Submittal

From: Community Development and Infrastructure

Subject: Emergency Repair to Ben Lomond Landfill Gas Flare

Meeting Date: June 24, 2025

Formal Title: Approve purchase of fixed asset, authorize Community Development and Infrastructure to execute an agreement for emergency repair of the Ben Lomond Landfill gas flare, and take related actions

Recommended Actions

1. Find that an emergency exists pursuant to Public Contract Code section 1102;
2. Pursuant to Public Contract Code section 22050, find that there is a need to continue with the emergency action by four-fifths vote;
3. Pursuant to Public Contract Code section 22050, find that the nature of the emergency does not allow for competitive bidding by four-fifths vote;
4. Adopt Resolution accepting unanticipated revenue in the amount of \$220,584 from the Ben Lomond Landfill Post-Closure Fund 50120;
5. Approve the transfer of appropriations in the amount of \$220,584 from the Ben Lomond Post-Closure Fund (650120-23440) to Intra-fund transfers 650120-95225 for the Ben Lomond Landfill Gas Flare repairs;
6. Direct Community Development and Infrastructure to negotiate and execute the emergency contract with Stearns, Conrad and Schmidt Consulting Engineers, Inc. (SCS), R# 2-6575 (Contract # 25D1164) in the amount of \$196,950 for emergency repair of the Ben Lomond Landfill Gas Flare System and return on August 5, 2025 for ratification of the emergency contract; and
7. Approve fixed asset purchase consisting of a landfill gas flare control panel with variable frequency drive in the amount of \$220,584.

Executive Summary

On May 16, 2025, Community Development and Infrastructure (CDI) received authorization from County General Services to approve Stearns, Conrad and Schmidt Consulting Engineers, Inc. (SCS) to proceed with an emergency repair to the Ben Lomond Landfill gas flare system under R# 2-6575. The repair is necessary due to the failure of the existing control panel, which causes flare malfunctioning, resulting in potential air quality violations from the Monterey Bay Air Resources District (MBARD). A properly operating landfill gas flare is essential to maintaining environmental compliance and efforts to complete this emergency repair in an expeditious manner are necessary to avoid air quality violations.

Discussion

The Ben Lomond Landfill gas flare controls the amount of landfill gas that accumulates in the closed Ben Lomond Landfill and prevents surface emission and subsurface

migration of methane and other gases. The Ben Lomond Landfill has been closed for over thirty years, and the amount of landfill gas generated through the anaerobic decomposition of buried waste is now significantly less than what the flare and control panel were originally designed to manage. The control panel is now antiquated and fails to start and stop the flare as needed. This chronic flare system failure results in the accumulation of landfill gas within the closed landfill and heightens the potential for air quality violations. Without the procurement and installation of a new control panel with an automated variable frequency drive (VFD) component to regulate the flow of gas, the flare will be unable to sustain operation at minimum temperature to ensure proper landfill gas destruction and prevent emissions. The County is required to notify MBARD whenever the flare operates outside of permitted conditions. MBARD is currently requiring the County to address the problems with the Ben Lomond flare as soon as possible to avoid air quality violations and the potential for landfill gas to migrate offsite.

In addition, the proposed flare control system repair will extend the life of the current flare and delay the major expense needed to replace the existing flare with a smaller capacity unit. The new landfill gas control panel and automated VFD are designed to be adjustable and will integrate with a future smaller flare designed for the diminished amount of gas generated by the Ben Lomond Landfill.

SCS is the County's contracted engineering consultant for landfill gas compliance and monitoring, which includes operations and maintenance of the landfill gas collection, conveyance and destruction system (flare). Board of Supervisors approval is necessary for this project, as there is a fixed asset component to replace the failing flare control panel and install a new unit with an automated VFD.

Financial Impact

Funding for this project is available within the Ben Lomond Post-Closure Fund, GL 650120-23440, and appropriations will be transferred to the Recycling and Solid Waste FY 2024-25 budget under Fund 50110, GL 625110-86110-P51103. The total cost of the emergency Ben Lomond Landfill Gas Flare repair project, which includes a recommended fixed asset purchase, is \$196,950. Department overhead at 12% for this project brings the total cost to \$220,584.

Strategic Initiatives

Equity Framework - County Facilities & Infrastructure
Operational Plan - Operational Excellence
Climate Action - Waste

Submitted By:

Matt Machado, Deputy CEO / Director of Community Development and Infrastructure

Recommended By:

Carlos J. Palacios, County Executive Officer

Artificial Intelligence Acknowledgment:

Artificial Intelligence (AI) did not significantly contribute to the development of this agenda item.