

Questions haunt waste program despite planning

Tuesday Oakland voters will decide a ballot proposal to finance the proposed \$500 million solid waste program, the most expensive public project in county history. This is the final part of a series on the solid waste program and the controversy it has generated.

By Pat Murphy
staff writer

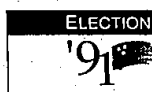
Nobody can legitimately say the county's proposed solid waste program was put together haphazardly. The package voters will decide

Tuesday is the result of more than two decades of deliberation, involving hundreds of experts, officials and citizen representatives.

Oakland has spent more than \$5 million in consulting fees — a figure that critics point to with glee, and proponents defend as necessary.

"When you're working on something this important, you want the best consultants available," said County Commissioner Roy Rewold, R-Oakland Township. "And that costs money."

Even with that kind of planning, however, the solid waste program is riddled with unanswered questions.



A financial statement on the program, for example, notes how \$399,750,000 of the money to be raised by the sale of bonds — and paid off with tipping fees — will be allocated.

It notes that \$296,910,000 will be spent on the Auburn Hills Incinerator.

tor, \$32,767,228 on the Material Recovery Facility (MRF); and \$64,607,356 for landfilling.

But it doesn't go into any financial detail about the household hazardous waste program or composting operations. "We would have more details about those programs," said Ann Hobart, spokesman for the county's solid waste management department, "but we were advised to stop working on them until after the election."

Putting everything on hold might be a prudent policy for county planners given the importance of Tuesday's election. But omissions on plans for composting and hazardous waste pickup likely fuel concerns that Oakland County isn't serious about recycling.

That concern has been voiced repeatedly by Sherry Clair of Rochester Hills, Carol Izant of Southfield and Michael Schwartz of West Bloomfield. They are members, respectively, of HOPE (Help Oakland Preserve the Environment), the Zero Discharge Alliance and the Oakland Environmental Protection Council — some of the citizen groups urging voters to reject Tuesday's bond proposal.

Even so, those close to the waste program insist it's a solid, well-conceived program that will safely and efficiently handle municipal waste well into the next century.

"I think anyone who really looks into the program will see that it's well put together," said Commissioner Rewold, who predicts the proposal will pass Tuesday.

"They will realize our trash problem will not go away and that our options are limited," said Rewold, who along with County Executive Daniel T. Murphy have nurtured the solid waste plan.

Jeff Daniels to receive arts award

Actor Jeff Daniels will be presented with the 1991 Michigan Artist Award at the seventh annual Governors' Arts Awards dinner and ceremony Monday, Nov. 4.

The event will take place at Detroit's ClubLand in the historic State Theatre. Tickets are \$150 per person for dinner, the awards ceremony and afterglow, or \$25 for the awards presentation and afterglow. Proceeds will benefit education programs of the Concerned Citizens for the Arts in Michigan.

For more information, call the CCAM offices at 961-1776 between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m.

ALSO TO BE honored that night are E. Ray Scott, known as the "art czar" of Michigan for the past 25 years, the first executive director of the Michigan Council for the Arts, with the Special Recognition Award; former Michigan Gov. William and Helen Milliken, the Civic Leader Award; and Morris J. Lawrence Jr., instructional coordinator of the music and dance departments at Washington Community College in Ypsilanti, the Arts in Education Award.

Also, the Dow Corning Corp. of Midland, the Business Honor Roll Award; WKAR-TV in East Lansing, the Media Honor Roll Award; the University Musical Society of Ann Arbor, the Creative Arts Collective of Detroit; and the Grand Rapids Civic Theatre, Arts Organization Awards.

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Stash your trash.

both sides sway voters

As Tuesday's election draws closer, both sides of the incinerator issue prepared to again take their message to voters.

Today, for example, a coalition of groups was scheduled to hold a press conference at the County Auditorium to urge a no vote in next week's election.

"Construction of a massive trash incinerator in Auburn Hills renders the proposed solid waste plan unacceptable," said John Freeman, a

Madison Heights resident who is spokesman for a group called Taxpayers for a Clean Environment.

Two days earlier, the big three of Oakland County's Republican Party — County Executive Daniel T. Murphy, former prosecutor L. Brooks Patterson and tax foe Richard Headlee — came out in favor of the proposal.

"I've spent a career fighting taxes and I know a pretty good deal when I see one," Headlee said in a press release. "I urge you to vote 'yes' on

this important proposal that means much to the future of Oakland County."

The endorsement by Headlee, author of the so-called Headlee amendment to the state constitution, is presumably meant to offset opposition from the Oakland County Taxpayers Association.

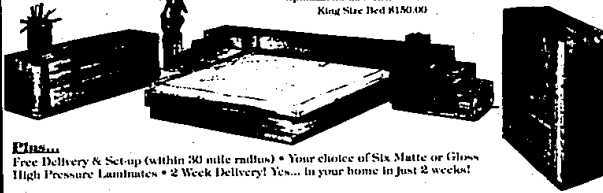
Through its chairman, Orton Township resident Dominick Vincentini, the association is urging voters to reject the solid waste bond issue.

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