

DNR overhaul impedes trash plan go-ahead

By Pat Murphy
staff writer

Oakland County is stymied in its plans to implement the solid waste program narrowly approved by voters last week.

The governor's plan to restructure the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and problems with the Oakland's 641 plan — the legal blueprint for its solid waste program

— have made it impossible for officials to move, rapidly or otherwise, said Roger Smith, county deputy director of solid waste management. "But we hope to get the revised IGAs (intergovernmental agreements) out to the individual communities by the end of the year," said Smith. "They will have until April to act on them."

Smith and others had hoped to move more rapidly to implement the

recycling portion of the solid waste program approved last week 70,908 to 70,685. But changes in Lansing make it difficult.

"We can't just move ahead, even though we got a yes vote," Smith said. "We can't even get going on recycling."

GOV. JOHN ENGLISH surprised Oakland County officials — and others — last week by announcing he wants to reorganize the DNR. Among other things, the governor would eliminate the Air Pollution Control Commission, the agency that

was to hold public hearings on Oakland's proposed incinerator before acting on its operating permit.

That's a significant change, said Smith. If only because county officials — as well as those still opposed to the incinerator proposed in Auburn Hills — don't know what agency would perform that function.

"We've been in contact with the governor's office," Smith said. "They said the changes (in the DNR) are too extensive to fax and they'd mail them to us. So far (Wednesday morning) we don't have them yet." Smith said he is also concerned

about changes DNR officials have told him they want in Oakland's 641 plan. He hasn't seen the proposed changes. Furthermore, Smith said he is confident they can be made. "But it adds to the uncertainty," he said.

Residents concerned that Oakland might be forced to import trash to keep the incinerator operating will be encouraged by one change Smith said the DNR wants.

"They (DNR officials) want specifics on our import-export policies," Smith said. "They want specifics about the trash Oakland imports and exports."

CURRENTLY THE county's 641 plan states Oakland is striving for a point at which it will neither import nor export trash, Smith said. "But we let the market forces operate. We don't impose restrictions."

"The DNR wants specifics about when and how trash will be imported or exported," Smith continued. "Otherwise the DNR will close the borders."

Another specific the DNR is asking for, Smith said, is our emergency plan. The county has contingency plans to take its trash to other counties if that ever becomes necessary.

Recount expected for paper ballots

By Pat Murphy
staff writer

A recount of key precincts in last week's election on Oakland County's solid waste program will cost \$2,000, according to the head of a group opposed to the incinerator proposed in Auburn Hills.

"That recount would target areas such as Bloomfield, West Bloomfield and Waterford townships where paper ballots were used in the Nov. 5 election," said Diane L. Pederson, president of Help Oakland Preserve the Environment.

HOPE WAS scheduled to meet with other anti-incinerator groups Wednesday evening to discuss strategy and how to finance the recall, said Pederson.

"But there's definitely going to be a recount," she said.

Those interested in challenging the results of last week's election — one of the closest in county history — have a tight schedule.

The election results are expected to be certified Tuesday. After that, challengers have six days — or the close of business Nov. 25 — to request a recount.

On the ballot Nov. 5 was a proposal on financing the proposed \$500 million Oakland County solid waste program, including a controversial incinerator in Auburn Hills.

Uncertified results showed the proposal passing 70,908 to 70,685, a difference of 223 votes.

The election set two benchmarks

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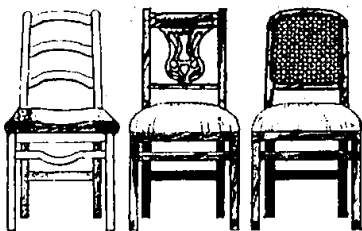
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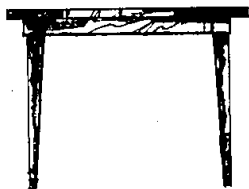


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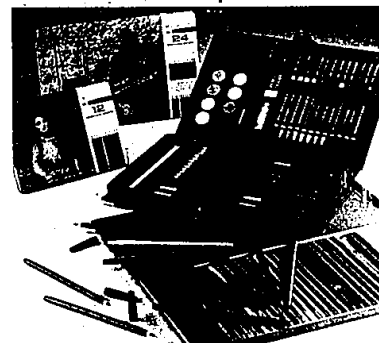
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