

# **CCWD addresses concerns about biosolids composting**

## **Guest Column**

**From the Calaveras County Water District**

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There has been a lot of frustration and confusion the past few weeks about the possibility of a biosolids composting facility at Calaveras County Water District's wastewater treatment plant in Copperopolis.

CCWD has participated in two well-attended community meetings over the last week in an effort to respond to the community's concerns. Many in the community are concerned that the project would create dangerous traffic conditions, generate unpleasant odors in their neighborhoods, decrease property values, or undermine the rural nature of Copperopolis.

CCWD would oppose a project with those outcomes. To pursue such a project would be contrary to the district's mission and core values. The Copperopolis site is only one of several sites in the county that are being evaluated for suitability to develop a biosolids composting facility. The Calaveras County Planning Commission recently held a hearing to determine whether a biosolids composting facility could be allowed on a parcel zoned for Public Service ("PS").

For context, the commission was provided with information about the conceptual design of a biosolids composting facility on CCWD's treatment plant property in Copperopolis, which is zoned for Public Services ("PS"), but there was no project-specific approval at issue and no project applications have been submitted. Any such project on CCWD property would have to be approved by CCWD before it would be considered by the county.

In this case, the CCWD Board of Directors has not even discussed approval of such a project. CCWD and other wastewater agencies currently truck biosolids to a facility in Suisun City because there are no local facilities designed to handle the material.

A biosolids composting facility could be a positive addition to Calaveras County as long as it is appropriately located, and the environmental and traffic impacts are mitigated. Modern biosolids composting facilities do not generate offsite odors, they create good local jobs, produce high-quality compost for gardening and agricultural use, and they reduce cost for local wastewater agencies, including CCWD. It is for these reasons that CCWD would consider a biosolids handling facility, but any proposed site will first be carefully and publicly evaluated for potential negative impacts to the community.

As an integral part of Copperopolis, CCWD strives to serve the community with integrity and transparency. We appreciate engagement from the community on this issue and look forward to future opportunities to provide accurate and complete information regarding this issue in the area.

CCWD is a nonprofit public agency. Our mission is to protect, enhance, and develop Calaveras County's water resources and watersheds to provide safe, reliable, and cost-effective services to our communities.