

# Supes reluctantly approve Cal-Waste hike

By Nick Baptists / The Valley Springs News / May 31, 2023

An 8.21 percent increase in solid waste collection fees was granted last week by the Calaveras County Board of Supervisors to California Waste Recovery Systems, LLC, but the relationship between the two appears to be turning hostile.

California Waste Recovery Systems, LLC, or Cal-Waste, recently opposed a move by the county to spend \$9.6 million to extend the service life of the Rock Creek Landfill. Cal-Waste made a proposal to haul all of the county's waste out of the county.

Board members Jack Garamendi, Benjamin Stopper and Gary Tofanelli at the May 23 board meeting voiced dissatisfaction with the contract between the county and Cal-Waste that essentially gives the waste-hauler automatic yearly rate increases.

If the board did not grant the increase, the county itself would have to make up the difference.

Garamendi and Tofanelli also voiced displeasure with information Cal-Waste sent to the public about the recent proposal to extend the life of the county's landfill.

Tofanelli called Cal-Waste's publicity about the landfill proposal "misleading and not accurate."

He added Cal-Waste was silent when it came to providing the public information about its own rate hike.

But, "a deal is a deal," Garamendi said, acknowledging there was little the board could do at this time.

However, Stopper hinted renewal of the contract in 2026 will come under much more scrutiny by the board.

According to county officials, Cal-Waste has received a total of 25.1 percent in rate increases since the contract began in 2016.

The monthly cost of a 35-gallon cart will increase by \$2.23 with the latest hike, \$4.81 for a 65-gallon cart and \$8 for a 95-gallon cart.

Higher fuel costs were attributed by Cal-Waste as one of the main factors for the rate increase.

In the end, the board vote was 5-0 in favor of the rate hike.