

Waste district endorses new company for Peninsula hauling, old company cries foul.

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Tip your hat to Waste Management, and say hello to the new hauler on the block: GreenWaste Recovery.

In a decision that will redefine the Peninsula's waste hauling in the coming decade, the Monterey Regional Waste Management District (MRWMD) recommended, by way of its Technical Advisory Committee, to endorse GreenWaste Recovery as the preferred waste hauler for Peninsula cities when Waste Management's contracts expire in 2015. Each city (except Monterey, which has its own hauler) will now decide which hauler to award a 10-year contract.



MRWMD's Jeff Lindenthal says the GreenWaste recommendation comes partly from a desire to elevate the Peninsula's sustainable reputation.

Nic Coury

The recommendation came after a request for proposal process that included four companies in the final stage, public presentations and interviews.

"They emphasized they're entrepreneurial, that they're innovative in finding markets for materials," says MRWMD Deputy General Manager Jeff Lindenthal, who drafted the recommendation.

GreenWaste, based in San Jose, was the one company that stood out in the November public presentations with respect to their green cred, boasting a 95-98 percent diversion rate, or the percentage of waste that is diverted from a landfill, for items from the recycling bins they service. That commitment to resource recovery, it seems, also pays: The company's proposal came in as the cheapest of the four, and also includes education and outreach as part of their base proposal at no additional cost.

"If you do it right, it can be cost effective," says Emily Hanson, GreenWaste's director of business development. "We are able to replicate what we know to be successful."

Part of that outreach will include visits to commercial food-generating businesses to educate them about organics collection, to get an idea of their waste stream and to analyze whether or not the business might save money with less trash, more compost.

There are some cities, however, where GreenWaste was not the cheapest. Bayside Sanitation came in cheapest for Sand City and Del Rey Oaks, followed by Waste Management, which was also cheapest for Carmel.

Bayside would not accept the contracts if they won only two. Waste Management – in its cheapest proposal – would not replace curbside bins, which Lindenthal stresses the district wants.

Felipe Melchor, Waste Management's district manager, feels the process was skewed towards the district's wants, not those of the ratepayers. "We feel the recommendation is completely biased," Melchor says. "I don't see the benefits to the ratepayer."