



Juneau Commission on Sustainability

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Date: April 5, 2024

To: Denise Koch, Director of Eng & Public Works
Wade Bryson, Chair of PWFC

From: Nick Waldo, Chair of Juneau Commission on Sustainability & Chair of JCOS Solid Waste Subcommittee

Subject: Support for Waste Disposal Options Study

Solid waste is a top priority for improving sustainability in Juneau, and the PWFC is already familiar with the issues surrounding the current landfill and its expected useful lifespan. This problem cannot be solved without understanding the full picture of what waste needs to be disposed of, how much of it, and what the options are for doing so. JCOS supports both studies currently in process to obtain this information: the waste characterization study already approved and the waste disposal options study currently under consideration.

We previously expressed “wholehearted” support for funding the waste disposal options study under the FY25 CIP process. Instead funding it from the Zero Waste Program CIP will accomplish the same goals, and we have been assured by CBJ staff that the program has adequate funds to support this new study along with the waste characterization efforts. It will be useful to understand the finances and feasibility of potential options - a new landfill, an incinerator, shipping solid waste south, and shipping to a SE regional landfill.

The costs of delay are potentially significant. Some of the options require long preparatory periods before they can be brought into operation. If the current landfill must be retired before an optimal solution is in place Juneau could be stuck with an ad-hoc solution that incurs potentially much higher financial costs and, if large waste volumes must be transported out of state, unnecessary greenhouse gas emissions. Conversely, identifying options early could allow for synergies to be identified and planned for with other CBJ efforts, such as the municipal composting facility, in a holistic strategy.

JCOS encourages the approval of this study without delay.