



THE CITY OF KEY WEST
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July 11, 2019

Ms. Monica Haskell, SAB Chair
1300 White Street
City Hall
Key West, Florida 33040

Re: Key West Landfill six-month summary report on 7/11/19 SAB agenda

Dear Ms. Haskell and SAB members

I want to thank you, the Chair, and all members of the Sustainability Advisory Board for your time and efforts in considering the important environmental and public safety concerns related to the Key West landfill located on Stock Island.

As the sponsor of the resolution referring this matter to your board, I have taken particular interest in this issue. The City resolution on this subject initially called for an independent appointed committee to analyze the safety and environmental concerns related to the landfill and to explore possible future uses including but not limited to recreation, solar panels etc. . . My colleagues assured me that your board would be available to independently and thoroughly review and report your conclusions. It is noteworthy that the city manager did not support the creation of an independent group to review the safety of the landfill at that time.

The Utilities Department is an outstanding part of our city management and its director is excellent. On July 11th, the SAB is expected to approve a two-page report prepared by city management, specifically the Utilities Department. Many of us were expecting an independent report, not one from city management to confirm the safety of the landfill. This does not appear to be an independent study and report and much of the two-page report is repetition of previous reports already made by city management in the previous 1-2 years. This report also leaves me with many questions.

Were any independent experts experienced with landfill closures consulted? Are materials supporting the report available? (No materials are published on the agenda item) Were reports considered by the SAB from the Florida or Federal Departments of Environmental Protection? Where are these reports? Is there a thorough explanation of the measurement units (parts per million vs parts per billion) used to detect/monitor the levels of release of Hydrogen Sulfide (HS) gas? What levels of HS gas are acceptable in the presence of children, the elderly and those infirm? Are the 7 vents leaking methane

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and HS gas continuing to do so now (note on page two citing a 2016 review of the vents)?

I also wonder why mining the landfill is a prominent discussion topic. If there is no need to address the safety of the landfill, then why is a presentation on landfill mining occurring at the July 11th SAB meeting as well? In addition, are other less extreme measures available to address the public safety of our residents?

No one disputes that the landfill has no bottom liner or collection mechanism for the toxic chemical soup existing there known as “leachate.” No bottom liner means that the toxic chemicals are going somewhere, correct?

We all know that the landfill is located immediately adjacent to an elementary school and across the street from the City’s only nursing home and hospital. Protecting our children and elderly resident is paramount. We also know that protecting our reefs and sensitive marine environment is extremely important. Thank you for your consideration of these most important issues facing our city.

Sincerely,

Samuel J. Kaufman
City of Key West
City Commissioner, District 2

cc Key West City Commission
Key West City Manager

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