

ITEMS #33-36₍₂₎

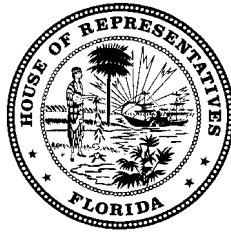
ADDITIONAL MATERIAL

PUBLIC HEARING

FEBRUARY 25, 2025

SUBMITTED AT THE REQUEST OF

COUNTY ADMINISTRATION



Florida House of Representatives

Representative Dan Daley

District 96

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February 24th, 2025

County Administrator Monica Cepero
Broward County Commission
115 S. Andrews Avenue, Room 409
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301

Re: Opposition to the Proposed Expansion of Monarch Hill Landfill

Dear County Administrator Cepero,

I write to you today on behalf of the northwest Broward community in opposition to the increase in size of the Monarch Hill Landfill. I urge you to deny or, at a minimum, delay any further consideration of the proposed expansion of the landfill until the completion of the Regional Solid Waste and Recycling Master Plan, which is expected by August. While I understand the master plan has been previously delayed, that is no reason to make a quick and misguided decision. Proceeding with this decision beforehand is premature and undermines the comprehensive planning efforts that should guide waste management in Broward County.

For years, residents and local governments have voiced strong concerns about the landfill's continued expansion and its long-term environmental and public health consequences. The cities of Coconut Creek and Deerfield Beach have consistently opposed this expansion, citing numerous issues, including increased odor, air and water quality concerns, visual blight, and the disproportionate burden placed on surrounding communities. These concerns are not speculative; they are well-documented in past agreements, legal challenges, and public opposition.

Reasons for Denial or Delay:

The Landfill is Not Up to Modern Environmental Standards

The Monarch Hill Landfill has been in operation since the 1960s, and as a result, many of its environmental protections do not meet modern regulatory standards. Reports indicate concerns regarding:

- **Runoff and Groundwater Contamination:** Older landfill sections were not constructed with the same stringent liners and leachate collection systems now required for modern facilities. Groundwater monitoring has already detected contaminants, raising concerns about the risk of further pollution.
- **Air Quality and Odor Control:** The landfill has a history of odor complaints from nearby residents, exacerbated by aging infrastructure that does not effectively capture landfill gas emissions.
- **Stormwater Management:** The site lacks updated stormwater controls, increasing the risk of runoff contamination into nearby ecosystems.

If the County were to grant Waste Management's request for expansion, it must only do so after ensuring that the entire existing landfill is brought into full compliance with current environmental and public health standards. Granting an expansion without first remediating existing issues would be an irresponsible decision that places local communities at further risk.

Pending Regional Waste Master Plan

Broward County's Solid Waste Authority has commissioned a consultant to develop a Regional Solid Waste and Recycling Master Plan, which is expected to be completed by August. This plan is designed to offer a strategic, data-driven approach to waste management for the county. It is entirely irresponsible to approve a landfill expansion before understanding the comprehensive needs and alternatives for solid waste disposal.

Premature and Uncoordinated Action

- The County has stated it is awaiting the Solid Waste Authority's findings before making a decision on the proposed land use amendment for Waste Management's site. The same approach should be taken with the landfill height increase.
- Rushing this decision undermines the credibility of Broward County's own comprehensive waste planning process. Any landfill expansion should be evaluated within the context of that broader strategy – not in isolation as a short-term fix.

Public and Municipal Opposition

- Both Coconut Creek and Deerfield Beach have expressed deep concerns about the public health, environmental, and aesthetic impacts of increasing the landfill's height from 225 feet to 325 feet, which would make it one of the tallest points in Florida.
- The County's own Local Planning Agency (LPA) declined to find this expansion consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. This raises questions about whether such a significant change aligns with Broward County's long-term vision.

Height Comparison to Other Landfills is Misleading

In defending this proposed expansion, the County has cited three other Florida landfills – Okeechobee Landfill, Medley Landfill, and J.E.D. Solid Waste Facility – as examples of sites exceeding 225 feet. However, these comparisons are inapplicable and misleading because:

- None of the cited landfills are located in majorly developed areas. Monarch Hill is uniquely situated in the midst of dense residential and commercial communities, making its environmental and visual impact far more significant.
- The County has not provided any comparative analysis of setback requirements, infrastructure strain, or long-term community impact. Monarch Hill is already an eyesore, and increasing its height to 325 feet will make it a permanent, imposing feature in the skyline of Broward County.
- The landfill will become the second-highest point in Florida – a distinction that serves no public benefit and instead cements its role as a regional dumping ground rather than an efficiently managed waste facility.

Broward County must recognize that the Monarch Hill expansion does not belong in the same category as landfills in remote or industrialized locations. It is inappropriate to justify this height increase by citing landfills that do not share its geographical and community context.

Lack of Justification for Expansion

- Waste Management has not demonstrated the necessity of expanding the landfill’s height, particularly before the Regional Solid Waste Master Plan is complete. Without this study, the need for expansion cannot be properly assessed.
- The County’s Comprehensive Plan calls for minimizing landfill use in favor of sustainable waste-to-energy solutions. Expanding landfill capacity runs counter to this goal.

Should the County Commission refuse to delay this decision, I will take any necessary action within my authority to protect the residents. While I prefer collaboration, disregarding the ongoing waste planning process and the concerns of local municipalities leaves me with few alternatives.

I respectfully urge the Commission to act in the best interest of Broward County residents by denying this request or delaying the vote until the Regional Solid Waste and Recycling Master Plan is finalized. Thank you for your time and consideration. I welcome the opportunity to discuss this matter.

Best,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dan Daley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Dan Daley
Florida House of Representatives
District 96