

**From:** [Elizabeth DeVos](#)  
**To:** [Krohn, Margaret](#); [#County Board Recipients](#)  
**Subject:** File # 2021 RES-440 – Please vote NO to Authorizing the Purchase of Yahara Hills Land for County Landfill  
**Date:** Monday, May 9, 2022 1:44:32 PM

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County Board Members,

Please vote “NO” to Authorizing the Purchase of Yahara Hills Land for County Landfill. This design has yet to be tested anywhere else so close to a densely populated area so there are too many unknowns regarding the full impact to our quality of life, health and safety, and property value. We have already unexpectedly had to tolerate the ill-effects of the Rodefild landfill for the past 5 years; we have 8 more to go. We have been given zero reasons to believe this new landfill will be a better neighbor. Please do not add on another 40 years of suffering for these communities; please vote “No”.

There are too many questions to move forward on this proposed project and land sale:

## OPTICS CONCERNS

- **THE EAST SIDE OF MADISON IS DANE COUNTY’S CONTINUAL DUMP:** The East Side of Madison has shouldered the burden of the county’s waste for 40-50 years. We were told the existing landfill would be capped, and instead it was expanded to the size of “7-story building.”
- **MISLEADING BRANDING:** The sustainability campus is 10% of the landfill - thus this project is largely a landfill.
- **MADISON’S REPUTATION:** This is going to be located at the interstate and Beltline-- the most common way into the City of Madison and this is the welcome mat we lay out?! "Welcome to Madison, just drive through this valley of garbage first!"
- **FUTURE BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT:** No one's going to want to come build a hotel next to a landfill or open a new restaurant nearby. You're potentially killing off business in a thriving community.
- **NO LOCAL AND NATIONAL PRECEDENT FOR THIS INTENDED DESIGN?** What is the existing precedent in the state or nation where landfill/sustainability campus has been built this close to existing residences of this magnitude. Their examples lack direct application to our situation in terms of public impact. The County’s example of the Kent, MI Sustainable Business Park is located 12 miles south of Grand Rapids surrounded by farm fields.
- **COMPOSTING OUTCOMES WILL BE SMELT SOONER THAN YOU THINK:** The new sustainability campus will have composting — a greater smell concern overtime. Dane County Landfill’s goal is to begin composting of organics and food in 2025 (15-30 acres) Goal to begin composting of organics and food in 2025 (15-30 acres). Is that enough time to even design and build a plan for enclosed composting technologies that can do a good job of containing and treating the inherent odors from composting on any scale? Composting on a large scale produces greater smell concerns than the current

landfill initiatives.

## FISCAL CONCERNS

- INCLUDED PARTIES TO THE CURRENT LANDFILL AGREEMENTS DO NOT SUFFICIENTLY INCLUDE IMPACTED PARTIES: Landfill communities within 1,500 feet of the proposed landfill are invited to participate in local negotiated agreement and potential compensation plans, but McFarland is likely NOT included unless less Madison and Cottage Grove municipalities explicitly invite the village to join the negotiations. Allegedly McFarland School District had plans to build a future school within 2,000 ft of the proposed landfill and were NOT notified of this plan and NOT given the chance to respond to it before the land sale was tentatively approved.
- LAND AGREEMENT PROCESS IS A BAND-AID SOLUTION WITH QUESTIONABLE DEGREES OF COMPENSATION FOR THE SOCIAL, HEALTH, AND ENVIRONMENTAL NUISANCES TO COME: The Land Agreements have not been determined yet, but previous negotiations with existing parties of the Rodefild Landfill and expansion have shown their compensation has been tough to obtain and limited in scope. [https://dane.granicus.com/player/clip/1371?view\\_id=1&redirect=true&fbclid=IwAR2S-mp-UFoE97OUPF\\_NebUBOMOfK5gtOrUHy-R2IGCPMp6jhrv\\_J2OS7w](https://dane.granicus.com/player/clip/1371?view_id=1&redirect=true&fbclid=IwAR2S-mp-UFoE97OUPF_NebUBOMOfK5gtOrUHy-R2IGCPMp6jhrv_J2OS7w)
- IF COST IS A CONCERN, WHY NOT GET MORE BIDS ON THE LAND BEFORE SELLING IT AT COST: If the reason the City of Madison is selling this land, to deal with a revenue-loss from the existing golf course, then why not try to get optimal bids for the land to maximize profit? How do the social, environmental, and perception costs affect future economics? What is the cost/benefit of this approach compared to other alternatives? We can't answer this question because there is no Plan B from the City of Madison -or- Dane County.

## POLITICAL CONCERNS

- BUSINESS DECISION VERSUS A POLITICAL DECISION: This proposal has far-reaching impacts beyond the City of Madison and Dane County Landfill. This was a few unelected people in a room deciding one location for this dump- and never looking at any other sites. There should have been several options explored and presented to the public for input. The backroom decision-making needs to stop. Let's shine some light on this process
- PRIVATE VS PUBLIC SCOPE: The Dane County Landfill is not funded by tax-payer dollars, but the City of Madison is their largest client. Why hasn't the city of Madison asked for additional plans? Why have they not sought out tax-payer input? Dane County Landfill has explicitly stated they have no "Plan B" for the landfill expansion, and provided very limited details on whether the task force searched for alternative plans.
- LACK OF VOICES AT THE TABLE: Legislative officials have said they have NOT heard much public response to the proposal. Also, Dane County Landfill's current

resolution to existing landfill smells, is not sufficiently addressed via a website reporting mechanism and current waste technologies. The smells still occur, and although Dane County Landfill has good intent to be a good neighbor, it is questionable if it's mandated to report on these concerns to the public as they occur.

## **DESIGN CONCERNS**

- **VERTICAL EXPANSION SCOPE CREEP?:** The current landfill has 6 years of air space, and working on a vertical expansion that will give us 9 years. How will we ensure a vertical expansion won't occur with the new landfill?
- **TRAFFIC CAPACITY IS UNKNOWN:** John Welsh said traffic to the current landfill is 300-400 trucks a day with 1,200 tons of waste a day. How will the new landfill proposal interact with the changes made to the Hwy 12/18 and Hwy AB traffic changes? Do we understand the potential impact here? This was briefly addressed by John Welsh at the April meeting. If the Landfill Negotiation Process will include a traffic study, why would the Village of McFarland's development plans not be automatically included in the discussion?

## **HEALTH CONCERNS**

- **HEALTH CONCERNS MAY IMPACT MORE WITH LANDFILL EXPANSION:** Allegedly, existing parties and nonprofits close to the current Rodefeld Landfill have experienced ongoing health concerns
- **ONGOING SMELLS HAVE ONLY BE TREATED, NOT RESOLVED:** The smells from the landfill are an ongoing nuisance that has not been fully resolved- despite current efforts and technologies within the existing landfill . How can we have confidence this wouldn't occur in the new landfill — especially one that is closer to residential homes.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS**

- **IMPACT ON AIR QUALITY:** Particulates in the air are not only a public nuisance, but **ALSO A POTENTIAL SAFETY HAZARD.** We need more research to understand how this impacts our community. The Dane County Landfill has focused on the smell, but has not elaborated on the influence of particulates in the local air
- **WATER TESTING:** Do the well and water safety plans in place address all impacted parties, not just those within the 1,500 ft designation?
- **WHO WANTS TO GO HANG OUT A PARK NEAR A LANDFILL?:** Is this realistic?

Thank you,

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