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Waste Authority Board Authorizes Environmental Review

(Gonzales) At its September 15 meeting, the Salinas Valley Solid Waste Authority moved closer to determining if a proposed plasma gasification facility will be an environmentally sound choice to eventually close the Johnson Canyon Landfill near Gonzales. With the Board of Director's decision, the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report will begin to study a technology offered by Plasco Energy Group of Ottawa, Canada that converts municipal solid waste into fuel that will be used to make electricity. The Report will be completed by Environmental Science Associates in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act. The purpose of the study will be to inform the government decision makers and the public about the potential environmental impacts of the proposed project and alternatives, and to identify ways these impacts can be avoided or significantly reduced through mitigation measures. Public participation will be encouraged during upcoming meetings to receive questions and concerns to be addressed in the Report. Meeting notices will be published in local newspapers. While several speakers voiced opposition to the process or the proposed project, letters of support were received from State Senator Anthony Cannella, former California Senate Majority Leader David Roberti, Monterey/Santa Cruz Counties Building and Construction Trades Council, Monterey Bay Central Labor Council, AFL-CIO, Monterey County Farm Bureau, Salinas Valley Builder's Exchange and the Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce. Salinas Mayor Dennis Donohue noted "It is interesting that those opposed to the project or the process are also opposed to gathering more information, and those in favor of exploring the technology are eager for the review process to begin." Stated Richard Perez, Soledad city councilman "The only way to answer these people's questions is to do the studies, present it to them in writing, and once presented to the public, to respond to them and answer these unknowns."

The Salinas Valley Solid Waste Authority will be the Lead Agency for the review process and is a joint powers agency made up of the following local governments: Monterey County (eastern and northern portions), and the cities of Gonzales, Greenfield, King City, Salinas, and Soledad.

The Authority's mission is to manage Salinas Valley solid waste as a resource, promoting sustainable, environmentally sound and cost effective practices through an integrated system of waste reduction, reuse, recycling, innovative technology, customer service and education. For more information, visit www.svswwa.org.