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# Santa Clarita-area Chiquita Canyon Landfill signs deal to allow monitoring of odors

The agreement will allow the landfill to continue to operate, but does not address removing the pollutants or cleaning the air and soil.



A trucks dumps garbage atop the Chiquita Canyon Landfill in Castaic. (photo courtesy of Los Angeles County Public Works).

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SANTA CLARITA — After two days of hearings, an agreement was reached Thursday, Jan. 18, with the operators of the Chiquita Canyon Landfill and the South Coast Air Quality Management District to address odors and residue that has been polluting the air in the nearby neighborhoods and the soil at the landfill.

The agreement will allow the landfill to continue to operate, but does not address removing the pollutants or cleaning the air and soil. Rather, it requires the landfill to reveal the source of the pollutants and allow monitoring of the pollution.

The SCAQMD has received more than 7,000 complaints and issued 112 violation notices to the landfill since 2023. The agreement reached Wednesday will direct the landfill to document health risks that it poses to the neighboring communities, particularly ones in Val Verde.

Landfill officials told the AQMD South Coast District Hearing Board, that met for two days Tuesday and Wednesday, that progress on reports will take several months and drilling projects would be required to address the odors from the landfill.

The source of the odor is believed to be a product of dimethyl sulfide which is creating sulfuric odors that can spread over several miles in the air.

Leachate, a chemical produced from rotting trash and landfill gases, is leaking and puddling at the landfill, and creating pollutants through decomposing garbage, AQMD Supervising Inspector Larry Israel said at the hearing.

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“The leachate smell that we detected, it’s like this putrid almost like a port-a-potty type of odor – it’s pretty horrendous, actually,” he said Wednesday.

The agreement reached Wednesday at the hearing includes monitoring and reporting guidelines for the landfill to follow. They are:

- community monitors will be installed in and around the landfill within 75 days; 24-hour sampling will be done three times a week until those monitors are installed;
- a website dedicated to posting those results for residents in real time will be created;
- there will be an oversight process for the landfill’s committee;
- clarifying language will be put in the order that health studies for the landfill will base their conclusions on the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment standards;
- the landfill will seek approval of a permanent plan to address the problems while these temporary measures are being implemented.

There is a status board hearing planned for April 24 or 25, or as soon as it can be scheduled with the hearing board.

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