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## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
2011ENV0044-000925  
July 25, 2011

Ministry of Environment

### **Metro Vancouver Solid Waste Management Plan approved**

VANCOUVER – Environment Minister Terry Lake announced the approval of a solid waste management plan (SWMP) that minimizes garbage generation, maximizes recycling and includes the addition of several conditions to ensure the environment is protected.

The plan, as approved, includes:

- New goals for diverting 70 per cent of the Metro Vancouver region’s waste through recycling, composting and other programs by 2015, increasing to 80 per cent by 2020.
- Strategies for reducing the amount of waste produced by 10 per cent by 2020.
- A range of options to deal with the greatly reduced waste stream that this plan will produce.

“Metro Vancouver now has the ability to pursue a mix of options for managing waste, provided they balance the interest of surrounding communities that share their airshed,” said Lake. “I’m confident this plan will reduce the amount of garbage generated in the region and provide strong environmental protection.”

“This solid waste management plan will help us preserve non-renewable resources, save energy, generate revenue, protect the environment and reduce greenhouse gases,” said Metro Vancouver board chair Lois Jackson.

Solid waste management plans must protect both the environment and the health of people. The ministry thoroughly reviews the plan to ensure it meets both provincial and federal rules for waste management, including a requirement for waste reduction and recycling before landfilling or waste-to-energy (WTE) options are considered.

Local governments are required to consult the public, and First Nations, before submitting the plan and the ministry considers the results of that consultation when reviewing the proposal.

Metro Vancouver's SWMP has met these requirements. Ministry of Environment approval of the SWMP allows local government to begin implementing the plan, including pursuing development of any new facilities outlined in the plan.

NOTE: Lake will be available to speak to media from 2 - 3:30 p.m. Monday, July 25.

A backgrounder follows.

Contact:       Suntanu Dalal  
                  Communications  
                  Ministry of Environment  
                  250 387-9745  
                  Suntanu.Dalal@gov.bc.ca

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# BACKGROUND

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## **Metro Vancouver Solid Waste Management Plan**

### **Conditions of approval**

The SWMP has been approved with the addition of a number of conditions that recognize the importance of safeguarding air quality. Among those conditions, Metro Vancouver must:

- Undertake a competitive process for any new or upgraded WTE facilities or landfills that considers options both inside and outside of the Metro Vancouver region.
- Recognizing that the Fraser Valley Regional District (FVRD) and Metro Vancouver share a common and critically important airshed, if Metro Vancouver pursues establishing additional in-region WTE capacity, it shall consult with the FVRD to address air quality concerns prior to beginning construction of a new or expanded facility.
- At a minimum, Metro Vancouver must establish a working group with the FVRD on the potential impact to the airshed due to additional WTE capacity. The working group may include the local health authority(s) and must, within one year of any Metro Vancouver decision to pursue in-region WTE:
  - a. Develop recommendations for WTE emission standards that do not conflict with provincial or federal policy and/or legislation;
  - b. Develop recommendations for an environmental monitoring program for any new or expanded in-region WTE facility(s);
  - c. Establish mitigation measures that address reasonable concerns of the FVRD with respect to additional WTE in-region;
  - d. Include any other reasonable related issue agreed to by the parties;
  - e. If the parties are unable to reach consensus within the timeframe, they will submit their respective positions to an arbitrator who will render a recommendation and report to the Ministry of Environment's Director responsible for the Environmental Management Act for consideration in any concurrent or subsequent regulatory process;
  - f. Be supported and resourced by Metro Vancouver;
  - g. Provide quarterly updates to the Regional Manager, Environmental Protection.
- Ensure methane gas collected from solid waste management facilities can be used as an alternative fuel, and for generating clean electricity or heat.

## **Waste to energy regulations**

Approval to pursue WTE under a solid waste management plan should not be considered a license to burn garbage. Proposed WTE facilities require a number of further authorizations – beyond approval as part of a SWMP – before they can be built and begin operation. The details of these authorizations will vary depending on the size, location and type of technology proposed for the facility.

A permit or operational certificate will most likely be required. This would include an extensive review of the proposed location, size, amount and type of emissions and other factors. This process includes further public consultation.

Depending on the size and scale of a proposed facility, an assessment by the Environmental Assessment Office may also be required.

Proposed WTE facilities must have a high degree of energy recovery, consistent with European standards. They must also meet B.C.'s emission standards, which are among the most stringent in the world.

The Ministry of Environment also requires communities to target 70 per cent waste diversion through reducing, reusing and recycling before they consider waste-to-energy as an alternative to landfilling.

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                  Communications  
                  Ministry of Environment  
                  250 387-9745  
                  Suntanu.Dalal@gov.bc.ca

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