

Landfills, public benefit schemes, property value and public opposition

The effects of landfills and other solid waste facilities on nearby residential properties cannot be easily generalized; however, academic research and other evidence indicate that residential property values are not necessarily adversely affected by close proximity to such facilities. In some circumstances, the impact can be positive.

State-of-the-art, environmentally safe landfills, transfer stations, and waste-to-energy facilities are able to contribute to healthy land values through host community fees, tax revenues, jobs, reliable waste disposal services, energy generation, and infrastructure improvements.

Several examples, such as a study in Texas for a planned landfill, concluded, "Throughout the state, research at other landfills has shown no decline in property values and, in many cases, nearby property values have actually increased around well-designed and operated facilities."

"Generalizations and misinformation about the community impacts of these needed facilities only exacerbate the problem. The nature of this problem is aptly summarized by the First Law of Garbage, which is: 'Everybody wants it picked up, but nobody wants it put down.' And, the second part of this Law is: 'Nobody wants it put down anywhere near them.'

"Safe, environmentally protective disposal facilities will be needed regardless of how much waste can be reduced or recycled."

There is a "growing compatibility" between modern, highly engineered landfills and the physical and economic environments of communities. "Landfills and communities can work together and accept each other and actually benefit from each other."

Key issue in this respect is the proper management of modern facilities. Until now most Romanian landfills are managed poorly, litter is seen everywhere near landfills. Nearby residents suffer from the adverse effects and the nuisance landfills cause.

To overcome public opposition against landfills it is needed to demonstrate that these facilities can be operated without adverse effects. Unfortunately only few of these examples, if any, exist in Romania. Citizens do not trust promises of authorities.

NGO's and citizens should be invited to visit well operated sanitary landfills just to demonstrate that this is possible.

During the site selection, construction and operation of a landfill a committee should be established with nearby residents and NGO's to monitor and discuss all the issues and keep authorities to their promises

In order to persuade a community to accept a landfill public benefit schemes are quite common. This means the community/municipality who accepts the landfill will receive a financial compensation.

In the Netherlands many examples of these public benefit schemes can be shown.

For example the large landfill in Dordrecht (Merwede Haven). This landfill was constructed in an old harbour area, with large problems of soil and dredging sludge contamination. The owner of the new landfill (the Province of South Holland) accepted the cost of sanitation of this area. After closing down the landfill (after 25 years of operation) the landfill will be transformed into a nature conservation area.

In the UK THE LANDFILL TAX CREDIT SCHEME is in operation.

The scheme encourages partnerships between the landfill operators, their local communities and the voluntary and public sectors. The aim of the scheme is to encourage more sustainable waste management practices, including recycling and to deliver lasting environmental and community benefits. http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/press_35_02.htm

Under the Landfill Tax Credit Scheme introduced in October 1996 Landfill Operators can redirect, as part of a voluntary donation, a proportion of their tax to fund environmental & community projects.

Following revision in April 2003, the scheme allows registered landfill site operators to contribute up to 6.5% of their landfill tax liability for the year to environmental bodies approved by the scheme's regulator ENTRUST. They can then claim a tax credit worth 90% of that contribution.

The Credit Scheme must be used for the purposes of implementing social, environmental and community based projects complying with specific 'approved objects' in the Regulations. The 'approved objects' are stated below and are discussed further in the 'Making an application' section:

- Projects that involve reclaiming land, the use of which has been prevented by some previous activity
- Projects that reduce or prevent pollution on land
- Projects that provide or maintain public amenities or parks within 10 miles of a landfill site
- Delivery of biodiversity conservation for species habitats
- Projects to restore or repair buildings for religious worship, or of architectural or historical interest within 10 miles of a landfill site
- Projects fund the cost of administrative, financial or other similar services, supplied to other

Look at the following websites;

[Waste Recycling Environmental Limited \(WREN\)](#)

[Yorventure](#)

[Onyx Environmental Trust](#)

[Biffaward](#)

<http://www.harrogate.gov.uk/main.asp?page=2430>

<http://www.harrogate.gov.uk/immediacy-2430#biffaward>

OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE, Charities and the Landfill Tax Credit Scheme,
<http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk/supportingcharities/ogs/g055b001.asp>

See for more information White Paper SOLID WASTE LANDFILLS AND RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY VALUES By Bruce J. Parker, President & CEO National Solid Wastes Management Association (NSWMA)