

# City Manager Sums Up City's Stand On Garbage Proposal

(Editor's note: The following statement from City Manager Robert Klein sums up the city's stand on the proposal for compulsory garbage, an ordinance measure on tomorrow's city ballot.)

By Robert N. Klein  
Santa Cruz City Manager

For over a quarter of a century the refuse from your garbage can has been trucked to an open burning dump just west of your present city limits off the coast road. Twenty-five years ago the town was hardly built up and the farm area was less occupied and this type of ultimate disposal of garbage and trash presented little real problem. However, today your city is growing and the surrounding county farm area is becoming developed. On February 10, 1953 the city received a letter from the Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau, the first paragraph of which is quoted for your benefit:

"Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau appreciates the problems you have in respect to urban trash disposal and dump management. As you know, your dump creates a problem for rural residents living in its vicinity. It is a fire hazard, a rat breeder, the smoke is unpleasant for everyone and forces those living near it to leave their homes when it is worst, and refuse and trash trucks litter property of farm bureau members from the city limits to the dump."

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And on December 10 we had already received a letter from the state division of forestry regarding the fire hazard of our present dump and disposal area.

We have advised Charles A. McLean, Jr., executive secretary of the county farm bureau, that we would like to move our dump site and adopt modern cut-and-cover methods for garbage and refuse disposal; however, this costs money. Your city administration does not want to raise taxes nor does

it want to change the present 75 cent service charge to current customers for garbage collection.

It is believed that money to pay for the dump improvement project and the addition of trash service without charge to current and future customers can be derived from the addition of one-third more subscribers. Ask the telephone company or the gas and electric utility what happens to their unit customer costs if they are forced to run lines, poles, and service crews into residential streets with only a scattering of customers; obviously their unit cost would go up as ours does under the present practice of voluntary subscription. Under this practice part of the population who subscribe to the service stand the cost of maintaining the sanitary service and facilities excluding sewage from the entire city. The city could actually correct this problem and enact legislation without a vote of the people. But the best government results from the free development of public opinion and not from authority. For these reasons your city has provided the opportunity for you to say Yes or No on this issue on Tuesday.

Now exactly what is the issue? The text of the ordinance on this subject which appears on your ballot was drafted by the city attorney to comply with the legal requirements and wording of the Santa Cruz municipal code, which contains all of the existing laws of the city. The subject ordinance, No. NS-135, merely requests the citizens of this community to indicate by use of their right to ballot, whether or not all citizens should subscribe for garbage collection service or merely those citizens who want the convenience of this service.

1. This does not in any way alter or change your present service. The collection pickup will remain unsegregated from your back yard.

2. Public or private collection is not an issue.

3. The city does not contemplate changing to private contract service.

4. The current price for service is 75 cents. It is not contemplated that this will be changed.

5. Your garbage collection service is not seriously operating in the red, and the money needed is for the purpose of improving the disposal site, which is over a quarter of a century old.

6. In the past few years we have had six fires at the dump site which almost went out of control and endangered the property of surrounding county residents and provides a constant liability to the city of Santa Cruz.

7. The city does not provide combustible trash collection service. As a consequence, combustible trash accumulates in back of homes and business houses and is an ever present fire hazard recognized by the fire department and insurance people as a constant threat to this

As you know, proper disposal of garbage and trash is no new problem to civilized people of the world. The government collection of garbage began as a public health measure, rather than as a measure of convenience. Today most cities or their agents collect garbage and trash from all householders and businesses. During the past few years relatively little information has been available in literature or elsewhere for municipal officials on the planning and design of an economical and efficient refuse collection and disposal system to fit local conditions. Because of this situation, in 1949 the California state legislature appropriated to the University of California a large sum of money to start a sanitary engineering research project and to develop a comprehensive study on the various aspects of refuse collection and disposal. This study would show that Santa Cruz City provides to its customers the most convenient and expensive and sanitary type of collection service.

Your garbage and refuse (unsegregated) is removed from your garbage can in your own back yard. It is deposited into covered sanitary-type vehicles and does not become a problem until it is finally disposed of at the open burning dump site.

Therefore, the three principal problems with respect to your san-

itary disposal system are:

1. The lack of a trash pickup system, which encourages the storage of combustibles and increases therefor our community fire hazard and liability.

2. The fact that a third of the city disposes of garbage in unregulated fashion and, according to the health officer, contributes to the breeding of rodents, flies, and other disease.

3. The ultimate disposal is an open, burning dump site which is the most antiquated method of final disposal and is prohibited in most areas throughout the nation.

Theodore Roosevelt once said, "We cannot afford to let any group of citizens, any individual citizens, live or labor under conditions which are injurious to the common welfare." However, despite these conditions, which have existed here for many years, if the citizens want these conditions and don't believe they are injurious to the public welfare and are not a menace, they should vote "No" on Tuesday against proposed ordinance NS-135.

However, if you want these problems corrected and a monthly trash pickup to relieve you of your combustible rubbish, you should vote "Yes."

Money to pay for the trash service will be derived from the addition of one-third more subscribers. No one taking the standard residential service will be asked to pay more than 75 cents, the current rate. If we are to keep taxes down, we must have utility services, such as garbage-trash collection, that are self-supporting, and improvements to these services must necessarily be paid for from the revenue of the service.

I am not recommending either a Yes or No vote on this issue. That is strictly your business, not mine. I am simply trying to tell you the facts surrounding the issue and I hope that we receive a mandate which is an expression of the majority. In no other way can the people assure the type of municipal service they want for themselves and their city.