



Waste station translates into jobs

Bishop Eddie Banales

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There is an issue before the city of Pomona that is of vital importance to the future growth and economic well-being of both the city and its residents. As a longtime 91766 resident and stakeholder and after much study, review and consideration, I have decided to support the Pomona Valley Transfer Station project for the following reasons.

Over a decade ago, the city of Pomona commissioned an ad hoc committee to study the issue of locating a solid waste transfer facility. To date this has been the only objective study on this issue. The committee reviewed more than 20 potential locations and established a set of criteria that included size, zoning, proximity, streets and traffic. After extensive study, the proposed Pomona Valley Transfer Station site was chosen as the best location for a solid waste facility.

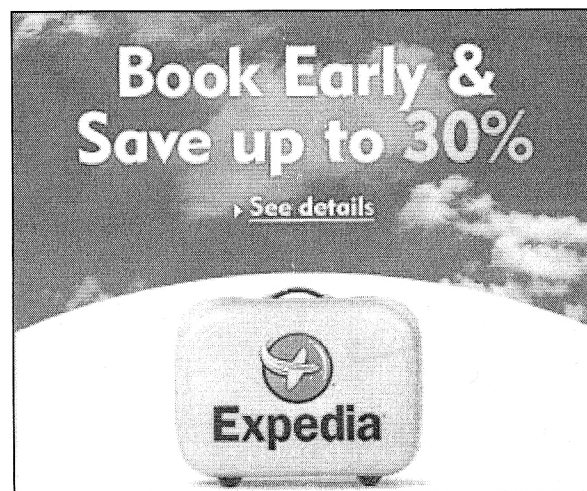
The project opponents summarily dismiss this extensive and objective study, out of hand. Moreover, they have misrepresented the actual criteria set for such a facility. In a recent opinion piece ("Waste station not right for Pomona neighborhood," April 18), One LA Pomona Valley Cluster leadership stated that the ad hoc committee "determined that no school should be within preferably 3,000 feet of the site but certainly no closer than 2,500 feet."

The transfer station site criteria set by the ad hoc committee for proximity to schools is actually 1,000 feet. The nearest school to the proposed site is Washington Elementary and it is over 2,000

feet away, double the actual stated criteria. Furthermore, there is an existing open-air trash transfer facility located less than 200 feet from Pueblo Elementary School in an area that had to be rezoned, yet there is no hue and cry from the self-proclaimed protectors of the people.

The proposed Pomona Valley Transfer Station is in an area that has been zoned for industrial use for decades. It will be a completely enclosed state-of-the-art facility equipped with a high-tech odor and ventilation system. Potential odors would be completely neutralized by the nontoxic, natural enzyme system. The facility will incorporate solar power and translucent panels. The site would also include an on-site compressed natural gas fueling facility. The project's stated use of CNG-fueled trucks as opposed to diesel vehicles would fully mitigate potential risk exposure impacts from diesel particulate matter.

The transfer station project has received Gold LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification. LEED is an internationally recognized third-party review for environmentally friendly construction and measures performance in energy usage/savings and environment protections such as water table impact and CO2 emissions reduction.



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If the proposed transfer station is approved and permitted the existing open-air facility would be closed.

The opponents of this project also attempt to mischaracterize the capacity of the transfer station. The proposed Pomona Valley Transfer Station would be permitted for 1,500 tons per day. The city of Pomona has historically generated approximately 1,000 tons per day. The remaining capacity would be available for local self-haulers and future growth. The One LA group has publicly stated the capacity of the project would easily grow to over 5,000 tons per day, making Pomona's image a "City of Trash."

They have stated that the project owners currently operate a similar facility in the city of Industry and that facility is operating at 5,000 tons per day. Nothing could be farther from the truth. First, any increase in permitted capacity is subject to an extensive environmental review process. Second, the Industry facility was opened 10 years ago at 600 tons per day and 10 years later it is operating at 1,200 tons per day, nowhere near 5,000 tons and still below the proposed permitted level for the Pomona project.

Another very important issue that is passed over by the Pomona Valley Cluster of One LA is the economic impact of the transfer station project. This will be a multimillion-dollar construction project with dozens of construction jobs. It will create an infusion of revenue to the local economy for materials and support services. It will generate an increase in property tax revenue due to the valuation of the project.

More importantly, it will generate host fees of nearly \$1 million per year to the city of Pomona and it will create approximately 50 new permanent, prevailing-wage jobs with benefits that include health care and retirement.

During these times of economic hardship for individuals and municipalities, a leadership group has a responsibility to the community and

cannot simply dismiss an opportunity for growth. This group of project opponents has consistently employed a series of emotional tactics designed to elicit fear in the citizens and residents of Pomona.

It is up to city leadership to fairly evaluate this project on its merits and future value to the community as a whole. I urge the Planning Commission and the City Council not to be swayed by misguided and misinformed emotion. Consider the greater good and the future growth of Pomona; approve the Pomona Valley Transfer Station.

Bishop Eddie Banales is senior pastor of the Southern California Dream Center.



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