County of San Luis Obispo Public Health
Environmental Health Services Division

Ordinance Amending Title 8 Chapter 8.13
Interim Moratorium on the Land
Application of Treated Sewage Sludge/Biosolids
MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to protect the health of the community by preventing the transmission of disease and exposure to harmful levels of environmental contaminants through continuous education, innovative state of the art surveillance, and creative mitigation of environmental health hazards.
PROGRAM CATEGORIES

Consumer Protection
Hazardous Materials Management
Environmental Protection

Environmental Health Supervisors
Aaron LaBarre (805) 781-5595; alabarre@co.slo.ca.us
- Body Art, Food Protection, Swimming Pools and Spas, and Vector Programs

Leslie Terry (805) 781-5553; lterry@co.slo.ca.us
- Beach Water Quality, Cross-Connection, Land Use, Small Public Water Systems, Waste Tires, Water Well Programs

Aaron LaBarre (805) 781-5595; alabarre@co.slo.ca.us
- Hazardous Materials (CUPA) Programs
CONSUMER PROTECTION

- Food Program
- Pool Program
- Body Art Program
- Housing and Institutions
HAZARDOUS MATERIALS MANAGEMENT

- Certified Unified Program Agency
- Lead Abatement
- Site Remediation
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

- Recreational Health (Ocean Water Monitoring Program)
- Well Construction
- Land Use
- Cross Connection Control
- Biosolids Land Application Oversight
- Shellfish Surveillance
- Water Systems
- Solid Waste / Liquid Waste
- Stormwater

The purpose for Biosolids Land Application Oversight is to prevent negative impacts to public health and the environment from land applied biosolids.
Definition of Biosolids: Nutrient rich organic material resulting from the treatment of domestic sewage in a municipal wastewater treatment plant.

Classes of Biosolids: Class B biosolids still contain some pathogens (but less than untreated animal manures) – further reduction of pathogens are achieved by natural forces. Class A biosolids are virtually free of pathogens and includes Exceptional Quality, or EQ, which results in the highest level of treatment. EPA rules allow EQ to be land applied like other commercially available fertilizers.
CA Biosolids Facts & Figures

• 56% land applied (Class B 25%; Class A 39%)

Alternatives to Land Application:
• 14% used for alternative daily cover or final cover at landfills
• An additional 9% disposed of in landfills
• 4.5% other
• 3% surface disposal (mines/wildfires)
• 3% incinerated
• 1.5% Alternative use (alternative fuel, deep well injection, etc.)

Total 688,000 dry metric tons

2014 CASA data
SLO Co. generates approx. 12,000 tons annually from about 20 WWTP’s.

Most all of the biosolids generated in the County are Class B material.

Approx. 76% of biosolids are composted by facilities outside the County; remaining 24% is landfilled in local facilities.
Biosolids Ordinance Timeline

- **1998**: PHD Task Force formed
- **2000**: PHD Task Force presents recommendations
- **2002**: Original interim ordinance complete including CEQA review by Env. Division of PD
- **2004**: Interim ordinance extended 48 months (until 2010) by BOS
- **2006**: BOS extends the interim ordinance for 48 months (until 2014) or until a permanent ordinance is enacted
- **2008**: PHD Task Force presents recommendations

- **2004**: PHD Task Force presents recommendations
- **2006**: BOS directs PHD to draft local ordinance for land application of biosolids
- **2008**: BOS enacts interim ordinance (with a 2006 expiration)
- **2010**: BOS defers permanent ordinance due to concerns regarding estimated cost of EIR ($200k). BOS opts to extend interim ordinance for another 48 months or until a permanent ordinance is enacted.
- **2012**: In 2014 BOS extends the interim ordinance for 48 months (until 2018) or until a permanent ordinance is enacted
- **2014**: EHS drafts permanent ordinance, initiates EIR, NOP process
- **2015**: Permanent ordinance (as presented) determined not ready for adoption. BOS directs staff to stop EIR
- **2016**: Oct. BOS extends Interim Ordinance to 2021, allows EHS to continue to assess ongoing scientific work by U.S. EPA

The Current Interim Ordinance

- The currently in place Interim Ordinance (I.O.) was adopted by the Board in 2004
- The I.O. was to be in place until a permanent ordinance was adopted to replace it
- Since I.O. enacted, no land application projects have been submitted to PHD for review and approval (I.O. excludes composted biosolids (EQ) from being regulated)
The Public Health Department – Environmental Health Services is recommending the Board:

Amend Section 8.13. of the San Luis Obispo County Code, to extend the expiration date for the Moratorium on the Land Application of Biosolids Ordinance from March 31, 2021 to March 31, 2026, in the absence of earlier enactment of a permanent ordinance. This will provide time for the County to further assess and consider the ongoing scientific work being conducted by the State Water Resources Control Board (“SWRCB”) and the US EPA.
Biosolids Land Application Oversight Information

What is this service?

The purpose for Biosolids Land Application oversight is to prevent negative impacts to public health and the environment from land applied biosolids.

Since 1998, the issue of the land application of biosolids/treated sewage sludge has been the subject of two separate efforts to guide public policy in San Luis Obispo County. Both efforts included public and local agency participation in working groups. In 1998, concern over a proposal to apply biosolids to a ranch to grow alfalfa near San Miguel led the Health Commission to form a task force. The Health Commission Task Force explored the subjects of wastewater treatment practices in San Luis Obispo County, the disposition of locally generated material, biosolids land application issues, federal, state and local regulations and oversight of the practices involved. Since that time, an inter-agency ordinance was developed to maintain historical levels of land application using only A/TO treated biosolids until a permanent ordinance is drafted. Land application of biosolids requires review and approval by the Environmental Health Services Division.

References

- San Luis Obispo County Treated Sewage Sludge/Biosolids Land Application Task Force Report and Recommendations, March 17, 2002
- Land Facts About the Bios and Benefits of Using Treated Sewage Sludge/Biosolids on Land (English version)
- Hechos Acerca de los Bios y Beneficios del uso de los Aguas Residuales Tratadas (Biosolids) en el Suelo (En espanol)
- Treated Sewage Sludge/Biosolids and its Application to Land in San Luis Obispo County (English version)
- Treated Sewage Sludge/Biosolids and its Application to Land in San Luis Obispo County (Spanish version)
- Prohibitions in the Land Application of Biosolids (English version)
- Prohibiciones en el Uso de Biosolids en el Suelo (Spanish version)
- Ordinance for the Land Application of Biosolids (2016)

Reference

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