

MK – On the April 25 2022 Central Tennessee Regional Solid Waste Planning Board Meeting
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Well, the Central Tennessee Regional Solid Waste Planning Board just voted to pass a resolution to disallow out of region waste from coming to Middle Point Landfill (or any landfill within the region which includes Rutherford, Warren, Coffee and Cannon counties). This is to take effect no later than December 31, 2022. Yes, I am sure there will be lawsuits, but it is a great step forward in the fight to make the county a safer, less smelly place to live.

The meeting in McMinnville was interesting. Several folks from Murfreesboro were there and some county elected officials. The RuCo Solid Waste Director said he got 30 or more calls today in support of the resolution. Commissioners Allen, Blair, Buchanan, Harris, and Phillips were present. Commissioner Phillips spoke in favor of the resolution. Mayor Ketron and Deputy Mayor Sandlin were also there. The Mayor spoke of his 30 or so years working on the landfill issue and said the Board was the right governmental body to take on this issue.

A group of us were in the audience holding signs supporting the resolution. Meanwhile, behind us, Commissioner Harris says to someone something along the lines of “Bet they won’t be holding those signs when they find out it will cost them \$25 a month to get their trash picked up” (Maybe not the exact quote but close). Really Commissioner Harris, do you think the public, particularly those interested enough in the issue to travel an hour to a meeting, don’t know anything about that issue? Most people living in cities in this country pay to dispose of their trash. All those people coming here from other states know this. Rutherford residents have been getting free dumping, but this is no longer realistic or conducive to a safe and sustainable environment if the deal with Republic means taking trash from all over Tennessee. \$25 a month would be a bargain. Commissioner Harris, your friends at Republic Services charge me, a county resident, \$35+ per month (it keeps going up since they drove the local small haulers we used to use out of business). Those fees will impact folks with lower incomes and there need to be some options for them, and perhaps incentives, for people to recycle and get lower trash fees the more they do. Yes, they do this in many other places.

This brings up another related issue. Back a few years ago the County Mayor said they were going to hold public meetings and make efforts to do community education and get people involved in the discussion about solid waste. Doing those things would go a long way in helping the public understand what is happening and why. Haven’t seen it being done by the county yet, though I would like to. Instead of removing Rutherford Co. from the Board like Commissioner Harris proposed a couple of months ago, with the mayor’s seeming support, let’s take the Board’s resolution and start acting on it. Let’s do what the temporarily tabled resolution 22-002 proposes and get help from the state to make this region a shining example of what solid waste management can look like in the future.