

ULSTER COUNTY RESOURCE RECOVERY AGENCY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ULSTER COUNTY RESOURCE RECOVERY AGENCY RELEASES LANDFILL SITING STUDY

Two Sites in the Town of Wawarsing Recommended for Further Planning and Study

Town of Ulster, NY – The Ulster County Resource Recovery Agency (UCRRA, or the Agency) today released a final report from Cornerstone Engineering & Geology PLLC (the Cornerstone Study) that identifies five candidate sites for the potential location of a landfill in Ulster County. The Cornerstone Study, which was presented to the Agency’s Board of Directors at its regular monthly meeting on Thursday, June 27, is intended to further the Agency’s operating mission to manage solid waste with a focus on resource conservation. It follows the 2021 release of a preliminary study by HydroQuest, which failed to result in further investigations of proposed sites.

In 2023, the Agency transported nearly 140,000 tons of municipal solid waste to a landfill in Seneca Meadows, nearly 250 miles from its Town of Ulster transfer station, at a total cost of approximately \$11,000,000 per year. The Agency’s contract for disposal at the Seneca Meadows landfill is set to expire at the end of 2024, and while the Agency is currently seeking proposals from landfills across the state, the future availability of cost-effective disposal options is uncertain.

UCRRA Executive Director Marc Rider, who joined the Agency in early 2024, presented the consultant’s findings and issued recommendations to the five-member Board of Directors to proceed with due diligence and detailed engineering studies for two of the five candidate sites.

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“While the Cornerstone Study identified two sites in the Town of Plattekill as ‘technically feasible,’ my review of the pros and cons of these two sites suggests that they are not likely to be successful in the permitting and entitlement process due to a variety of factors,” Rider stated. One additional site, an industrial brownfield in the Town of Esopus that requires substantial environmental remediation, was tabled for possible future consideration pending progress on cleanup work.

“It’s reasonable to ask why the only two sites in the entire County that I am recommending are both in the Town of Wawarsing,” Rider said. “The answer is simple: these are the only two locations with enough land, limited neighbors, and environmental conditions conducive to a landfill that are not in either the Catskill Park or the NYC watershed,” he added. Rider went on to explain that the process of further study will look closely at the potential impacts – environmental, economic and social – to the “host” community and will seek to offset any negative impacts that a landfill might have.

“We are still in the early part of this process,” explained Regis Obijiski, the Chair of the Agency’s Board of Directors. “I’m grateful to Executive Director Rider for getting us this far, and I know he will approach the remaining steps with thoughtfulness and care to ensure that whatever the outcome, the Agency remains faithful to its original purpose: to protect public health and the environment while sustainably managing our waste.”

The Cornerstone Study and the Executive Director’s presentation to the Board of Directors is available online at <https://ucrra.org/cornerstone-landfill-site-selection-study>. Any questions, issues or concerns related to the study of options for an Ulster County landfill should be directed to Executive Director Marc Rider via email to mrid@ucrra.org.

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About the Ulster County Resource Recovery Agency

In the mid-1980's, after new initiatives to close non-complying existing landfills were undertaken by the NYSDEC and strict requirements for the siting, construction, and operation of new disposal facilities were enacted, many communities found it beyond their financial and managerial capability to continue to dispose of waste in traditional ways. Consequently, many of the local municipalities in Ulster County requested that the Ulster County government assume the responsibility for solid waste management. In response, the Ulster County Legislature sought and received approval from the New York State Legislature to establish UCRRA as a public benefit corporation to develop, finance, and implement a comprehensive Countywide solid waste management program.

For nearly 40 years, UCRRA has been actively pursuing its mission to protect public health and the environment, promote sustainable practices and efficiently manage solid waste with a focus on resource conservation. UCRRA manages municipal solid waste (MSW), construction and demolition debris (C&D), dual stream recyclables, source-separated organics, electronic waste

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(e-waste), and biosolids. UCRRA operates two permitted facilities; the Ulster Transfer Station (TS) and the New Paltz TS.

Since 1997, UCRRA has been responsible for providing post-closure services to two closed landfills in Ulster and New Paltz. UCRRA manages the landfill leachate collection and monitors groundwater quality and other environmental controls at these closed landfills.

The UCRRA Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) was constructed in 2002 and processes dual stream recyclables from local municipalities or commercial businesses/institutions. The permitted capacity of the MRF is 90 tons/day, with storage capacity of 400 tons. UCRRA's Recycling Outreach Team offers educational facility tours of the facility, and many other services to promote recycling, composting, and waste reduction throughout the County.

The UCRRA Organics Recovery Facility was constructed in 2012 as a small pilot project, and was expanded in 2016 and in 2020. The Organics Recovery Facility processes source-separated organics (food scraps) from commercial partners using Extended Aerated Static pile method of industrial-scale composting. The food scraps are blended with woodchips, processed over 90 days, and manufactured into an STA certified compost product that the Agency sells in bulk and in 1-cubic yard bags. In 2021, UCRRA was recognized as the Small Scale Compost Manufacturer of the Year by the U.S. Composting Council.

For more information, visit the Agency's website: www.ucrra.org.