

# The Virgin Islands Consortium

## Fees For Dumping Waste At Territory's Landfills To Increase October 1; Waste Haulers Voice Concerns

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ST. THOMAS -- Beginning October 1, there will be a charge, calculated by weight, for any waste material brought to the St. Croix Transfer Station, the Susannaberg Transfer Station on St. John, and the Bovoni Landfill here, the Virgin Islands Waste Management Authority made known Thursday.

At a recent public meeting on the fees for dumping waste at territory's landfills, waste haulers were among the most vocal.

The tipping fee per ton ranges from \$31.28 to \$65.26 depending on the type of material being disposed, W.M.A. says.

W.M.A. Interim Executive Director Steven Aubin, explained that the new fees are required revenue for disposal costs. Already approved by the Virgin Islands Public Services Commission, the tipping fees will replace most of the funds now provided by the Government of the Virgin Islands, Mr. Aubin said, adding that such fees are standard practice throughout the United States and all over the world.

The amounts to be charged, he insisted, have been determined by extensive studies and comparisons, and are fair reflections of W.M.A's actual costs associated with solid waste disposal. The executive director put the annual cost at \$10.2 million to manage 200,000 tons of solid waste. The tipping fees will generate approximately \$6.9 million, with services to residents expected to cover the balance, according to W.M.A.

Mario Leonard, district director for solid waste, described the system to be used in determining the tipping fee, or cost for each load of waste: Upon arrival, a loaded vehicle will be weighed and the type of waste material assessed, before being allowed to dump (tip) the waste where designated. Leonard said that as it leaves, the vehicle will be weighed without the load, and charged according to the weight difference and category of disposed material. Waste haulers will be able to establish charge accounts with W.M.A. if they haul ten or more loads per week, while less frequent users will be required to pay using credit/debit cards or checks, but no cash will be accepted, according to W.M.A.

The commercial haulers present at the meeting had a number of questions and concerns. Among them, the anticipated impact the tipping fees will have on the bottom line of hauling contracts negotiated before the new charge was anticipated. Others suggested a flat fee, so that they can give their customers a more accurate estimate of the cost of the disposal job. Others questioned whether W.M.A. could be more creative with the materials being disposed by producing products for sale, thereby requiring less revenue from tipping fees.

W.M.A. officials said that while they welcome all comments and suggestions, and will take them under consideration, the tipping fees are needed and overdue.