

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Waste Management Further Delays Implementation Of Tipping Fees

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ST. THOMAS -- The Waste Management Authority (W.M.A.) has furthered delayed the implementation of tipping fees that were set to take effect on September 1, pushing implementation date to October 1 instead, as negotiations with waste haulers continue.

That's according to Public Services Commission Executive Director Donald Cole, speaking during P.S.C.'s budget hearing at the Earl B. Ottley Legislative Hall today. The P.S.C. sought a 2018 budget allocation of \$1,782,085.

Mr. Cole said Waste Management's decision to further delay the fees' implementation came after P.S.C. expressed dissatisfaction with the authority's awareness efforts leading

up to August 1, the original date of implementation. Mr. Cole also mentioned the protests that followed, suggesting that the authority's poor effort may have led to the dissension.

The dispute between waste haulers and W.M.A. took center stage following an impromptu press conference that the haulers held with media houses outside the Senate building in Frederiksted late July. There, the owners of almost all the trucking companies on St. Croix — among them Bates Trucking, Just Right Trucking, Atlantic Trucking, VI regulated Waste Management, Paradise Waste, Dan's Trucking and Marco Trucking — shared their grievances with media houses, [including The Consortium](#).

"Number one, the tipping fees are really high out the sky," said James Bates, owner of Bates Trucking. He explained that with the tipping fees, a 20-yard bin, which is the equivalent of 20 tons, increases a customer's charge from having only to pay the waste hauler, to now include Waste Management as well. At 20 tons, the payment to W.M.A. would be \$1020 — well over what it would cost for simply paying the waste hauler to dispose of the garbage.

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

"We gone from them not charging us anything to a thousand and change for one bin," Mr. Bates complained. "I just cleaned a property for a young lady, the cost for me was \$1340. One of her bins came in at 22 tons," Mr. Bates said. At that weight, the tipping fee for one of the customer's three bins would be \$1144. If the three bins weighed about the same, the tipping fee cost would be \$3432. "These expensive tipping fees that they're coming with is going to cripple this economy," Mr. Bates said.

[Another protest](#) was held the following week, this time outside the Waste Management facility in Williams Delight near the Sunshine Mall. There too, the haulers' stance remained the same. They feared they had become tax collectors, as Waste Management had encumbered them with the job of collecting the tipping fees from customers.

"We're here struggling for our businesses' survival today," said Lloyd Daniel of Dan's Trucking. "The Waste Management Authority fees are not going to allow us to operate as we have done in the past. It's going to be an impact on us, and it's also going to be an impact on the community at large."

A brief meeting was held with the haulers at the Williams Delight facility, led by Tawana Nicholas, W.M.A.'s director of engineering. But the meeting quickly disintegrated after W.M.A. refused to delay the tipping fees' implementation. Ms. Nicholas said the authority would return the P.S.C. to recommend a territory-wide flat rate, but a meeting date had not been set.

Waste Management's late decision to suspend tipping fees staved off a potential garbage catastrophe on St. Croix, as the trucking companies had vowed to stop collecting waste from residents with jobs requiring bins, as well as business entities. With the suspension of fees, the haulers will continue business as usual during the negotiating period.