

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Tipping Fee For Commercial Solid Waste to Increase \$1.25 Yearly for Five Years, Waste Management Reveals During Town Hall

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Roger Merritt, executive director of the V.I. Waste Management Authority has disclosed that the tipping fee for commercial solid waste that will commence on January 10, 2022, is scheduled to increase by \$1.25 yearly for the first five years of implementation.

Addressing a virtual town hall meeting on Wednesday where the topic was to explain the justification behind the implementation of the new tipping fees, he said that the fees will be used to improve the operations of the landfills in the territory.

"One of the things we wanted to make sure we did because there was not a tipping fee before, is that we implement starting at a very low number and as the years progress that fee will increase on a yearly basis from year-one to year-five," he said.

"Our starting year will be \$2.50, and in next year it will \$3.75... and by year five it will be \$7," he announced in the meeting which was facilitated via Zoom and broadcasted live via the Facebook page of the authority.

Mr. Merritt described the fee as "very moderate fee." He added, "The thing about the fees and the necessity for the fees is that the Waste Management Authority is operating under a consent decree for both landfills and the requirement for the consent decree is that we have a solid waste fund."

Mr. Merritt said federal arms including the Environmental Protection Agency have been asking about a tipping fee implementation timeline, which he said is a requirement of the consent decree.

"Ultimately, I think this is going to help the authority move forward and allow us to operate these landfills in a much safer and friendlier manner," he said.

Mr. Merritt explained that the fee was originally approved in 2016 but was delayed because of various challenges. "The fee was based on a tonnage model; I was here back in 2016 when [the Waste Management Authority] was to implement the fee," he said while pointing out that the tipping fee initiative had to be halted in 2017 because of concerns from haulers.

"One of the things they were concerned about was how will you determine how much the weight was for a 20-yard bin. So based on those conversations, we went back to the Public Service Commission to get approval for the tipping fees based on volume," he said.

"So now, the way the fees are set up is starting at \$2.50 per cubic yard. So, if you have a 20-yard bin that bin is basically 2.50×20 , so that bin will be a \$50 fee," Mr. Merritt explained. This allows haulers to better charge customers. "In that way the haulers and other waste management providers will be able to tell what the fee will be upfront," he explained in the meeting which was attended by members of the community, including haulers.

Mr. Merritt used the occasion to inform the public about areas at the landfill that the tipping fee will be used to address. "From an infrastructure standpoint we have to develop new areas at the landfill; there is environmental monitoring associated with the landfill," he said.

Several of the infrastructures must be monitored on a quarterly basis. "There is methane gas that is generated at the landfill so we have to have a surface scan. We have a company that sees how much gas is generated on a quarterly basis; there is equipment that we have to use to operate the landfill. Those are some of the things associated with the landfill that this tipping fee will recover," he explained.

Speaking on the future operations of the authority, Mr. Merritt said there are other programs the management of the authority plans to implement, including a recycling program.

