



STAFF REPORT

Date: February 15, 2023

To: TRPA Governing Board & Forest Health and Wildfire Committee

From: TRPA Staff

Subject: Presentation and Recommendation on On-Site Biomass Energy Unit to be proposed at South Tahoe Refuse

Summary and Staff Recommendation:

TRPA Code of Ordinances Section 65.1.F prohibits the acceptance of biofuel applications until further research demonstrates the safety and environmental compatibility of such facilities. In November 2022, TRPA staff, Wisewood Energy, and South Tahoe Refuse and Recycling Services (“STR”) presented to the Forest Health and Wildfire Committee on an on-site small biomass unit opportunity at the STR collection center. The item was for informational and discussion purposes and no action was requested. The Forest Health and Wildfire Committee directed staff to bring the item back for committee action in February 2023 to recommend the Executive Director accept an application from STR for an on-site small biomass project at its collection facility.

Motion in the Forest Health and Wildfire Committee:

- 1) A motion to recommend the Governing Board direct the Executive Director to accept an application from South Tahoe Refuse for an on-site small biomass project at its collection facility.

An affirmative vote of a majority of the quorum present is required for a motion to pass.

Motion for the TRPA Governing Board:

- 1) A motion to direct the Executive Director to accept an application from the South Tahoe Refuse for an on-site small biomass project at its collection facility.

An affirmative vote of any four board members is required to pass this motion.

Background:

The STR Center, located in South Lake Tahoe, offers a variety of community services including waste disposal, green waste disposal and chipping, and recycling. STR currently receives approximately eight thousand tons of green waste from clearing for defensible space and forest fuels reduction work on local community plots. Recently, the amount of green waste has increased due to the Caldor Fire and community recognition of the critical importance of fuels reduction work to avert catastrophic wildfire. All green waste received at the STR facility is transported to the Carson Valley for composting or disposal

in a landfill. Transporting waste outside of the Basin can result in negative environmental impacts such as increased vehicle miles traveled, vehicle emissions, and truck traffic.

In December 2021, TRPA staff began discussions with community partners including the City of South Lake Tahoe, STR, and Wisewood Energy to discuss the potential for establishing a small on-site biomass unit at the STR collection center. The proposed unit would utilize a portion of the green waste to offset energy use at STR while also reducing trips needed to the Carson Valley. Overall, this would advance the sustainability of the operation and advance the City of South Lake Tahoe's sustainability goals.

Currently, TRPA Code of Ordinances Section 65.1.F prohibits the acceptance of biofuel applications until further research demonstrates the safety and environmental compatibility of such facilities. Wisewood Energy produced the attached report that outlines the environmental, safety, and community compatibility of this unit. This report provides sufficient information to accept an application, on a one-time basis, from STR and Wisewood regarding the on-site biomass unit. The report is attached for Committee and Governing Board review.

Accepting an application is the first step in the TRPA review process for this project. If an application is accepted, the project and environmental analysis will be presented to the full Governing Board for final decision.

Contact Information:

For questions regarding this agenda item, please contact Kat McIntyre, at (412) 225-2181 or kmcintyre@trpa.gov

Attachments:

- A. Environmental and Safety Assessment for South Tahoe Refuse Proposed CHP Unit
- B. Letters of Support from Partners

Attachment A

Environmental and Safety Assessment for South Tahoe Refuse Proposed CHP Unit

Attachment B

Letters of Support from Partners