Ecology, Yakima County tell Rocky Top landfill to clean up operations, stop nighttime work

PHIL FEROLITO Yakima Herald-Republic
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The company operating a landfill on Rocky Top west of Yakima has been told by two regulatory agencies to clean up its act or face enforcement actions.

The state Department of Ecology says the landfill — DTG Recycle — is emitting toxic gases into the atmosphere and must conduct cleanup work.
And Yakima County’s planning department says the company has been operating outside normal business hours in violation of its permit and has failed to install a vegetation buffer on the north side of its gravel mining area.

DTG’s landfill manager, Aaron Enebrad, said he would not be ready to comment on the matter until Monday.

In a response letter to Ecology, DTG said it was willing to work with regulators to address the problems.

“DTG is committed to working with Ecology and other agencies to address all issues via the appropriate regulatory mechanism,” the Oct. 26 letter said.

DTG acquired the former Anderson Rock and Demolition Pit in October 2019. The operation is on the flanks of Cowiche Mountain and includes a limited-purpose landfill, gravel mine and petroleum contaminated soils site.

The company has embarked on expansion efforts that have drawn the ire of nearby residents who have repeatedly complained of dust and odor from the site since it came under new ownership.

Residents also have complained about increasing traffic at the landfill and evening operations. The complaints led to the regulators paying closer attention to the operation, which prompted air and groundwater studies.

In late September, Ecology notified DTG that its landfill was emitting unsafe amounts of benzene and naphthalene into the atmosphere. The company was given 30 days to respond.
“Ecology has determined that it is in the public interest for remedial actions to take place at this site,” the letter said.

Cleanup must be done in compliance with the Model Toxics Control Act, the letter said.

The issues with the landfill are outlined on Ecology’s website.

If it doesn’t act, the company would face an administrative cleanup order, fines of up to $25,000 a day and liability for up to three times the costs incurred by the state, the letter said.

On Nov. 1, Yakima County Planning Official Tommy Carroll sent DTG a letter warning the company to stop operating outside its permitted hours and to install a vegetation buffer near one of its gravel pits as required in a 2003 mining permit.
Carroll’s letter included a photo of trucks with their lights on at the site after dark. He said the photo was taken about 9:30 p.m. and that hours of operations are to end at 6 p.m., according to the operating permit.

“The neighbors have expressed concerns that dumping is occurring after established operating hours, when agency oversight of the facility is non-existent,” Carroll said the letter.

DTG also is required to install a vegetation buffer five years before expanding its mining operations, according to a 2003 mining permit, the letter said.

Carroll requested DTG install the buffer during suitable weather and to forward proof of the work done to the county, the letter said.

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