

# CONTRA COSTA TIMES

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## Illegal dumping likely to pile up longer

By Paul Bugarino  
Contra Costa Times

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BAY POINT — At the secluded intersection of Driftwood Drive and Port Chicago Highway sits a small street sign that reads NO DUMPING.

For nearly a month, a brown couch, two recliners, a dirt-covered mattress and box spring, a stack of wooden shelves, miscellaneous pillows and broken glass could be found just south of the sign. The debris finally was removed a couple of weeks ago.

Around incorporated areas of Contra Costa and Alameda counties, growing piles of tires, filled black trash bags, sofas and mattresses can be spotted alongside roads. The discarded items are a longtime nuisance to residents and county officials.

The pile on Driftwood and other furniture strewn on Port Chicago Highway were enough to catch the attention of Charles Tremaine.

"It seems like there's a lot more dumping than before," said Tremaine at a Bay Point Municipal Advisory Council meeting last month.

The illegal dumping likely will continue to pile up, officials in both counties said.

Higher landfill fees and less-frequent pickups by county officials mean that more trash could be sitting out for longer, said Pattie McNamee, Contra Costa's deputy public works director.

Alameda County deputy public works director Rick Ruiz said his county is experiencing much the same. Though the amount of trash is comparable, about 400 cubic yards were picked up in Alameda County last month, compared with 1,200 in July 2008.

"If it doesn't pose an immediate hazard, it's probably going to be left there a little bit," he said.

The state's decision to delay payments of gas tax funds for six months to local governments has contributed to the problem, officials said. Some of that money is used for trash removal.

Alameda County's public works staff has lost some workers through attrition during the past few years, Ruiz said. To meet primary concerns such as traffic and pedestrian safety, services such as debris pickup have moved to the back burner.

Public works crews used to drive around Contra Costa looking for junk, but when the annual cost for that topped \$1 million a couple of years ago, administrators decided to scale back and wait until enough track collects to make it worth the time and effort, McNamee said.

"We had to shift our focus toward handling road issues and what could be a liability to the general public," she said. While the trash is an eyesore, Contra Costa cannot afford to have people out every day picking up trash, McNamee said.

The closest landfill to residents in East Contra Costa County is the Mt. Diablo Recycling Center and Transfer Station in Pittsburg, where it costs at least \$22 to dump household waste, \$38 for a refrigerator, washing machine or stove, \$16 to \$22 for a mattress and box spring, and \$6 per car tire.

Price increases through the years at transfer stations have been modest, said Jim Nejedly,

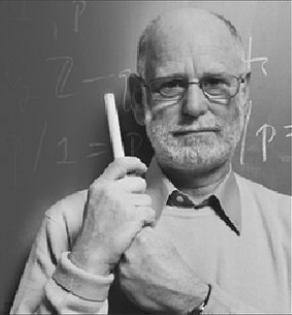
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facilities officer at Mt. Diablo.

Because of the poor economy, people likely wouldn't take items to the transfer station regardless of price, he said.

Isolated, rural spots are particularly susceptible to illegal dumping, those spots including Driftwood in Bay Point, roads that weave through Byron ranch land, Mines Road near Livermore, the winding road up the Altamont Pass, and Palomares Road near Castro Valley.

Contra Costa County Supervisor Federal Glover said money from the Keller Canyon Mitigation Fund helps with trash pickups in his district, which includes Bay Point and Bethel Island. The North Richmond area also has a program with the nearby landfill to handle illegal dumping.

Contra Costa Supervisor Mary Piepho, whose district includes Byron and Knightsen, said some active community members take the initiative and clean the debris.

Though acknowledging that illegal dumping is a concern, both said pickups may be reduced along with other county services because of budget woes. Meanwhile, frustration grows for some residents. Lifelong Bay Point resident Doug Katrones said trash piles up outside his home on North Broadway Avenue. He says trucks often pull up to the empty space between his house and a laundromat on Willow Pass Road and dump furniture, trash bags, even dead animals.

"I hate it. I can't stand it," Katrones, 47, said Wednesday.

Dennis Lopez, a Byron cattle rancher whose family has owned the land for 120 years, said it "burns my (behind) to see the trash."

Lopez shares tales of paint cans stacked on the side of the road and box springs, washing machines, batteries and tires left in front of his property — all because he's in "no man's land."

"It used to be like once a year we'd have a trailer full (of trash to take to the landfill). Now, it's almost once a week," he said. "There's no answer for it. The sheriff, the supervisors, everyone wants to help, but there's no money. It's not going to change until people start taking responsibility."

**Paul Burgarino covers Pittsburg and Bay Point. Reach him at 925-779-7164.**

### STASHing YOUR TRASH

There are places in Contra Costa and Alameda counties to dump large trash items:

Berkeley Berkeley Transfer Station/Oil Recycling Depot, 1201 Second St., 510-981-7270

Livermore Altamont Landfill & Resource Recovery Facility, 10840 Altamont Pass Road, 800-449-6349

Vasco Road Landfill & Recycling Drop-off, 4001 N. Vasco Road, 925-447-0491

Martinez Acme Landfill, 950 Waterbird Way, 925-228-7099  
Contra Costa Transfer & Recovery Station (CCTRS), 951 Waterbird Way, 925-313-8900

Pittsburg Keller Canyon Landfill, 901 Bailey Road, 925-458-9800  
Recycling Center & Transfer Station-Contra Costa Waste Service, 1300 Loveridge Road, 925-473-0180

Pleasanton Pleasanton Transfer Station, 3110 Busch Road, 925-846-2042

Richmond Golden Bear Transfer Station, 1 Parr Blvd., 510-236-8451  
West Contra Costa Sanitary Landfill, foot of Parr Boulevard, 510-233-4330

San Leandro Davis St. Transfer Station/Recycling Park, 2615 Davis St., 510-638-2303

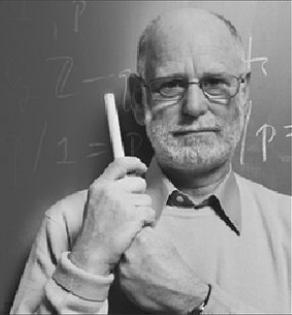
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## WhoM to call

People can report finding piles of junk in unincorporated areas of Contra Costa County by calling 800-663-8674 and leaving a message on the hot line or contacting the Contra Costa Public Works Department-Road Maintenance Division at 925-313-7000. In Alameda County, call 510-670-5500.

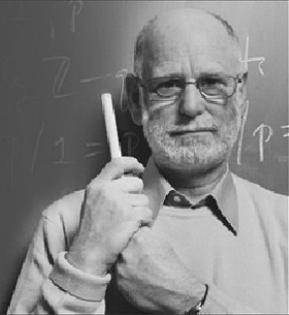
To report debris that has been dumped on a public road, it is important to first identify whether the section of road is within a city or in the unincorporated area of the county. If the debris is on a public road within a city, contact that city.

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