

# TOUR TAJIGUAS LANDFILL

**The Santa Barbara County Resource Recovery and Waste Management Division offers free tours to schools and community groups.**

**See what happens to your trash while learning ways to reduce your impact. Subjects can include: local trash history, waste diversion, and environmental measures.**

**This hour to hour and a half long driving tour includes 3 to 4 sunny outdoor stops.**



SANTA BARBARA COUNTY  
*Innovative Environmental Solutions*

## Background

Tajiguas Landfill is located 26 miles west of Santa Barbara, immediately north of Highway 101. It is operated by the County of Santa Barbara, and covers 80-acres in a confined canyon. The "hidden" landfill provides disposal for the unincorporated areas of the South Coast of Santa Barbara County, the City of Santa Barbara, Santa Ynez Valley, and the Cuyama Valley. Tajiguas Landfill began accepting our waste in the late 1960s as a County-owned and operated venture. As well as landfilling trash, the County processes yard waste on site into mulch and distributes locally.

In 2008, Tajiguas Landfill was awarded the Gold Award by the Solid Waste Association of North America Integrated Solid Waste Management Excellence. This award is based on a range of criteria designed to evaluate a commitment to environmentally and economically sound solid waste management. We continue this excellence to this day.

## Environmental Commitment

The County provides environmentally safe solutions for the collection and disposal of Santa Barbara County refuse. The County complies with stringent and extensive local, State and Federal regulations.

Staff monitors and manages groundwater and surface water quality, combining preventative measures with regular testing. Water that comes in contact with refuse is intercepted by a liner system, collected into an underground trench and conveyance system called the Groundwater Leachate Collection and Recovery System. None of this water leaves the site. Numerous monitoring wells are installed in strategic locations around the landfill and detect any potential impacts on groundwater resources.

Ongoing landfill improvements include the installation of a composite liner system for new landfill, expansions, and a "state-of-the-art" gas collection and disposal system for methane, a by-product of the landfilling process.

## Breaking News!

### Santa Barbara County Waste Diversion Rate at 73 Percent

We are at our goal of achieving the California goal to divert at least 75% of our waste by 2020! Currently we divert 75% of our waste by reusing and recycling generated waste. Statewide, the diversion rate is 65 percent. Santa Barbara County is accomplishing this through a wide variety of recycling programs, including curbside pickup of green waste; curbside pickup of mixed paper, glass, and plastics for recycling; and providing drop-off sites for hazardous materials collection and recycling.

### The Resource Recovery Project

A proposed project that would improve our environment locally and globally through advanced recycling, compost and waste management!

This 20-year project would process our waste that is currently buried at Tajiguas Landfill into 3 streams.

- Recyclables would be sent to market.
- Organics that would be anaerobically digested to produce energy, compost and soil amendments.
- Residual left overs would be buried at Tajiguas Landfill.

This exciting project would raise our recycling rate above 85%, higher than our current 73% diversion. Greenhouse gas emissions would be reduced, equivalent to taking 25,000 cars off the road. There would be enough electricity produced to power 1,000 homes in our community. This would be a cost effective approach, with no additional cost to taxpayers compared to alternatives.

### Converting Methane Gas to Electricity, in the Co-Generation Facility

Near the entrance to the landfill is a plant which converts methane gas into electricity. Gas wells in the landfill collect methane that is piped into this facility. The facility produces enough electricity to power 3,000 homes!

### The Tajiguas Landfill Expansion

In the 1990's alternatives to expansion were researched and reviewed, including shipping our trash elsewhere in the county or to another county, and the most economically and environmentally viable solution for Santa Barbara County's trash was to expand the Tajiguas landfill. With current disposal rates the landfill has 12 years remaining to reach capacity. Then where are we going to put our trash?

## Tour Preparation

Carpooling is recommended out to the site. Participants will drive from stop to stop in their company cars. It is mandatory to wear close-toed shoes, long pants, and sun protection. There are onsite restroom facilities; but try to use before you depart for the tour.

Bring water, notepad, and a camera.

**If it is raining or extremely windy, tours will be rescheduled.  
Please contact [Sam Dickinson](#) for directions to the Landfill!**