

**A RESOLUTION OF THE DEKALB COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS TO
ENHANCE ENVIRONMENTAL EQUITY AND SANITATION PRACTICES IN
DEKALB COUNTY**

WHEREAS, DeKalb County operates a landfill facility that is essential for the safe and efficient disposal of solid waste for county residents; and

WHEREAS, the County recognizes that residents living in close proximity to the landfill may experience disproportionate burdens, including odor, noise, and visual impacts, which can affect their quality of life and property values; and

WHEREAS, according to the EPA¹, Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) landfills are the third-largest source of methane emissions in the United States generated by human activity, with the USDA identifying food waste as the single most common material landfilled in the United States²; and

WHEREAS, the County is committed to equitable treatment of all residents and aims to provide relief to those disproportionately affected by landfill operations; and

WHEREAS, the County acknowledges the importance of incorporating objective data, including odor monitoring and community feedback, to ensure its programs are responsive to actual conditions experienced by residents; and

WHEREAS, the County desires to improve overall sanitation practices, reduce landfill waste, open a composting facility, and enhance communication with residents regarding environmental matters;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the DeKalb County Board of Commissioners as follows:

Section 1: Equitable Sanitation Rates

1.1 Establishment of Discount Program: An equity-based discount program is hereby established for residential sanitation customers whose primary residence lies within a 2-mile radius (10,560 feet) of the County landfill. According to GIS and Census data, there are approximately 12,327 County residents (4,482 households) within the identified 2-mile radius area.

1.2 Discount Structure: The discount shall be structured as follows:

- 0 to 0.5 miles: 50% discount
- 0.5 to 1.0 miles: 35% discount
- 1.0 to 1.5 miles: 20% discount
- 1.5 to 2.0 miles: 10% discount
- Beyond 2 miles: No discount

¹ <https://www.epa.gov/lmop/frequent-questions-about-landfill-gas>

² <https://www.usda.gov/about-usda/news/blog/food-waste-and-its-links-greenhouse-gases-and-climate-change>

Alternatively, the Department of Sanitation may adopt a continuous sliding scale formula based on distance, provided the maximum discount remains at 50% and eligibility ends at 2 miles.

1.3 Odor Monitoring Adjustment: The DeKalb County Board of Commissioners requests the Department of Sanitation integrate enhanced odor monitoring data as well as particulate matter data into its operational oversight. Should objective data indicate a sustained, measurable, and environmentally impactful increase in landfill-related nuisance (e.g., odor intensity or increased levels of particulate matter), the Department of Sanitation is authorized to propose temporary or permanent adjustments to the discount schedule, subject to approval by the Board of Commissioners.

1.4 Hardship Provisions: Residents living just beyond the 2-mile radius may apply for a hardship exemption. To qualify, applicants must demonstrate significant impact from landfill operations, supported by odor monitoring data, environmental reports, or other compelling evidence. The Department of Sanitation shall develop and administer an equitable review and appeals process for such claims, with final determinations subject to periodic audit by the Governing Authority.

1.5 Implementation and Verification: Eligible residents must submit proof of residency (e.g., driver's license, utility bill) to qualify for the discount. The Department of Sanitation shall use reliable Geographic Information System (GIS) tools to verify distance eligibility. Discounts shall renew annually contingent upon continued residency and proximity.

1.6 Fiscal Responsibility: The Department of Sanitation shall monitor the financial impact of this program and provide an annual report to the Board of Commissioners, detailing participation rates, fiscal impacts, and recommendations for program adjustments.

Section 2: Air Purifier/HVAC Filter Rebate Policy

2.1 Establishment of Rebate Program: The Administration is requested to establish a rebate program to assist residents in purchasing eligible indoor air purifiers and HVAC filters, aimed at mitigating the impacts of air pollution. The program shall be designed based on best practices from other jurisdictions, including the City of Paramount, California³, Washington, D.C.⁴, and Jacksonville, Florida⁵.

2.2 Program Eligibility: The Administration is requested to develop and implement the rebate program, considering the following:

- **Eligibility Criteria:**
 - Priority shall be given to residents in proximity to the County landfill.

³ <https://www.paramountcity.gov/government/departments/planning-department/air-purifier-rebate/#:~:text=Residents%20can%20receive%20a%20rebate,scale%20of%201%20to%2016.>

⁴ <https://www.dcseu.com/residential-rebates/dehumidifiers>

⁵ https://www.jea.com/residential_customers/residential_rebates/air_purifiers/

- Eligibility may be tiered based on proximity to pollution sources and/or vulnerability to air pollution (e.g., children, elderly, individuals with respiratory conditions). This may include use of an Air Quality Index (AQI) threshold.
- Consideration shall be given to household income to ensure equitable access to the program, with potential for increased rebates for low-income residents.
- **Eligible Products and Rebate Amounts:**
 - The program shall offer rebates for high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) purifiers and high-efficiency HVAC filters with a Minimum Efficiency Reporting Value (MERV) rating of 8 or higher.
 - Specific models that meet recognized industry standards (e.g., Energy Star) shall be identified.
 - The program may include provisions for portable air cleaners and/or whole-house filtration systems.

HVAC Air Filters:

 - MERV 8-12 Filters: Up to \$10 rebate per eligible household per quarter.
 - MERV 13+ Filters: Up to \$15 rebate per eligible household per quarter.

Air Purifiers:

 - HEPA or Energy Star Certified Purifiers: Up to \$50 rebate per eligible household. Limit 1 rebate per household.
- **Rebate Amounts:**
 - Rebate amounts shall be determined based on product cost and efficiency, with higher rebates for more effective and energy-efficient models.
 - Consideration shall be given to providing higher rebates for vulnerable populations or low-income households.
 - The County shall explore options for maximizing rebate amounts through partnerships with manufacturers or retailers.
- **Program Administration and Outreach:**
 - The program shall be administered by a designated County department or a third-party administrator.
 - A comprehensive outreach plan shall be developed to ensure that eligible residents are aware of the program and how to apply. This plan shall include:
 - Multi-lingual information and application materials.
 - Community workshops, town halls, and presentations.

- Partnerships with community-based organizations.
- Online resources and application portal.
- The program shall include a clear and transparent application process, with reasonable documentation requirements.
- The County shall track program participation and effectiveness, and provide regular reports to the Board of Commissioners.

2.3 Implementation post-BOC Approval: The Administration is requested to provide a detailed plan for the rebate program to the Board of Commissioners within 90 days of the effective date of this resolution. The plan shall include a proposed budget, funding sources, and a timeline for implementation.

Section 3: Composting Program

3.1 Request to Develop Composting Plan: The Administration is requested to enhance its residential composting program aimed at reducing the amount of food waste and other organic materials being diverted to the County landfill; an example of a pre-existing program is the Avondale Estates Community Composting Program⁶. Additionally, the Administration is requested to develop a commercial composting program designed for large-scale composting operations designed to handle a significant volume of organic waste from restaurants, businesses, and institutions, and other facilities.

The Department of Sanitation is requested to develop a plan for implementing a comprehensive residential and commercial composting program, including:

- Program goals and objectives.
- Methods for collecting and processing compostable materials.
- Public education and outreach strategies.
- Partnerships with community organizations and businesses.

3.2 Development of Plan: The Administration is requested to provide a detailed plan for the residential composting program to the Board of Commissioners within 90 days of the effective date of this resolution. The plan shall include a proposed budget, funding sources, and a timeline for implementation.

Section 4: Residential Notification Process

4.1 The County shall establish a clear and proactive process for notifying residents whenever 1) methane flaring (burning) will occur at the Landfill, or 2) air quality of the surrounding community is expected to be affected due to operations at the Landfill.

⁶ <https://www.compostnow.org/community-programs/avondale-compost-program>

4.2 The Department of Sanitation is requested to implement a multi-channel notification system that residents can voluntarily opt-in to, including, but not limited to:

- Email alerts.
- Text message notifications and/or robocalls.
- Website updates.

4.3 The notification process shall include the date, time, and expected duration of the event. Existing use of County communication systems, such as CodeRED, should be considered.

Section 5: Real-time Monitoring and Alert System

5.1 The County shall implement a network of sensors to continuously monitor odor and particulate matter (PM) levels around the landfill and the identified 2 mile-radius buffer, as well as assess feasibility of installing air quality monitors throughout DeKalb County per the May 2025 *Science for Georgia* report and proposal received by Commissioner Ted Terry's office.

For example, *PurpleAir* Monitors, recommended within the *Science for Georgia* report, measure particulate matter but do not directly measure odor. While various odor detection methods exist, such as the *Nasal Ranger* used by Athens-Clarke County's landfill to quantify odor strength, odor often indicates the presence of gaseous pollutants like sulfur dioxide, ammonia, or hydrogen sulfide. A comprehensive understanding of air quality in this area would benefit from measuring both odor and particulate matter, as some odorous pollutants produce particulates detectable by Purple Air Monitors.

5.2 The Department of Sanitation is requested to establish a system for providing real-time alerts to the County and residents when landfill odor and/or particulate matter thresholds are exceeded.

5.3 The system shall include, but not be limited to:

- The location and sensitivity of odor and particulate matter sensors.
- Established odor and particulate matter thresholds that trigger alerts.
- A protocol for responding to and mitigating these events.
- A mechanism for residents to access real-time odor and particulate matter data.

Section 6: Implementation and Reporting

6.1 The Chief Executive Officer is requested to take all necessary actions to implement the provisions of this resolution.

6.2 Upon implementation, the Department of Sanitation and other relevant County departments shall provide periodic reports to the Board of Commissioners on the progress of these initiatives.

Section 7: Effective Date

This resolution shall become effective upon its adoption by the DeKalb County Board of Commissioners.

ADOPTED this ____ day of _____, 20__ by the DeKalb County Board of Commissioners.

Michelle Long Spears
Presiding Officer
Board of Commissioners
DeKalb County, Georgia

APPROVED by the Chief Executive Officer, this ____ day of _____, 20__

Lorraine Cochran-Johnson
Chief Executive Officer
DeKalb County, Georgia

ATTEST:

APPROVED AS TO FORM: