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Reduce waste today through innovative resource management.  
Reach a waste-free tomorrow by demonstrating that waste is preventable not inevitable.

March 8, 2002

Dear Editor:

We have been following Ramsey and Washington Counties' exploration of whether changing how waste is collected could help reach our communities' environmental, health and safety goals. We believe that a well planned and well run collection system could help and that it could preserve independent haulers, assuring good competition.

We're the group that has managed the city's recycling programs for about seventeen years. We do not view this exploration as a threat to our programs and services, we view this as an opportunity to improve our environment and address the concerns expressed by the citizen's of Saint Paul. We answer over 40,000 call every year from residents across Ramsey County and we believe that public collection, when a city township or county arranges for the collection of solid waste through private haulers, has the potential to address many of the issues we hear about daily.

On April 25, our county commissioners will decide whether or not we consider public collection as a way to protect our health and the environment. Under immense pressure from the National Solid Waste Management Association (a solid waste industry trade association) and some of its prominent members who are publicly held multi-national waste hauling companies, the commissioners could decide to end this exploration before it even begins. We believe that the county commissioners should explore public collection since it can provide many benefits to our community when it is designed well.

A well-run system can improve the environment by providing an efficient way to recycle hard-to-manage items like tires, mattresses, brush, computers and other electronics. By organizing a collection system we could reduce the unsightly illegal dumping of these materials, reduce the number of trucks on the streets and in the alleys and provide the same level of service or greater.

Public collection can—and should—support the independent haulers and allow for competition. Many other cities in Minnesota and across the country have implemented these systems and have maintained the independent (family-owned) haulers and competition.

Public collection would allow us to take responsibility for our own waste. Most of the waste in Ramsey County goes to one of three places: a landfill in Iowa, a landfill in Wisconsin, or the refuse-derived fuel facility in Newport, Minnesota—a facility that taxpayers are committed to paying for through 2007 whether garbage is delivered there or not. Through public collection, the Newport facility could be fully utilized, eliminating the

need for the subsidy residents currently pay through a service charge on their property taxes. Therefore, businesses and residents would pay equable for the amount of trash they produce.

As residents of Minnesota we have a responsibility for our own waste. We need to consider all of these issues before we walk away from the idea of public collection. We expect our county commissioners to fully consider the benefits of a public collection system before dismissing its potential.

Sincerely,

Susan Hubbard  
President & CEO  
Eureka Recycling

Cc: Ramsey County Commissioners  
Saint Paul Neighborhood Community Councils  
Rick Person, city of Saint Paul  
Zack Hansen, Saint Paul-Ramsey County Department of Public Health