

\$2.5 million OK'd for disposal site at Hawkins Point

By Tom Kenworthy

Evening Sun Staff

The Board of Public Works has taken the first step toward establishing a state-owned and state-operated hazardous waste disposal facility by approving \$2.5 million in initial funding for a site at Hawkins Point in South Baltimore.

The facility will be ready to accept waste from Maryland industries by next May, when the only other available site in the state will close, Maryland Environmental Service director Thomas McKewen told the board yesterday.

The total cost of the facility located on 39 acres now owned by the Maryland Port Administration is expected to be \$12.5 million to \$13 million, which McKewen said would be recouped through tipping fees paid by users of the dump.

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He said the site should be able to accept all of the state's indigenously produced hazardous wastes over the next decade, if Maryland is successful in restricting its use to in-state industries.

"It will be a safe facility, on state property and operated by the state," McKewen told the ~~Evening Sun~~.

Gov. Harry R. Hughes, calling the safe disposal of toxic wastes "probably the most serious problem we have," said the Hawkins Point site is the best location for a disposal facility because it is

already an industrial area and because of its natural clay liner.

Comptroller Louis Goldstein said he was concerned that "other states will be beating a path to Maryland's door" once the facility is operating.

McKewen said the attorney general's office has been asked to rule on whether the state can limit access to the site to Maryland industries.

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In a report to the board, McKewen said failure to establish a state facility would leave Maryland industries with only "extremely expensive or environmentally intolerable alternatives" to disposing of their wastes.

Other than a chrome ore disposal site owned by the state at Hawkins Point, the only other Maryland facility for hazardous waste disposal is operated by Browning-Ferris Industries in Anne Arundel County. The chrome disposal site will reach capacity in March, and the Browning-Ferris site is scheduled to close in May. Browning-Ferris has applied for expansion.

The Hawkins Point facility would be used for disposal of those wastes which cannot be neutralized into safe substances, and the residue sludges of reprocessed wastes.

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Hughes, stressing the urgent economic need for the Hawkins Point facility, said "thousands of jobs are at stake" if industries in Maryland are left without a site for the proper disposal of their wastes.

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The projected cost of the Hawkins Point facility includes funds to explore the feasibility of using an adjacent available tract for disposal of non-hazardous wastes.

\$2.5 million OK'd to develop new hazardous waste disposal site

By Tom Linthicum

Annapolis Bureau of The Sun

Annapolis—The state Board of Public Works approved \$2.5 million yesterday to begin developing a new hazardous waste disposal site at Hawkins Point in South Baltimore.

The Maryland Environmental Service, a state agency that will operate the facility, plans to step up efforts to get the 39-acre site ready by May, when the permit for the state's only other general toxic waste dump is scheduled to expire.

"It's going to be tight. But given a reasonable, decent winter, we believe we can do it," said Thomas D. McKewen, the MES director. "If we miss it, it won't be by much."

About \$286,000 of the money will go to the consulting firm that will design the facility, Mr. McKewen said. The rest of the money will pay for initial site preparation, including earth moving, construction of an access road and building the clay-lined cells that will hold the toxic chemicals.

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The total cost of the project will be \$12.5 million to \$13 million and should be paid for completely by fees charged to firms using the facility, Mr. McKewen said.

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If the private toxic dump operated by Browning Ferris Industries in Anne Arundel county closes as scheduled next year, the state-run Hawkins Point facility would be Maryland's only secured hazardous waste landfill. State officials say the new dump could meet the state's toxic-waste disposal needs for 10 years.

In other action yesterday, the Board of Public Works:

Approved a \$23.4 million contract with Control Data Corporation—over the protest of the other bidder—for the purchase of new computer equipment for the state lottery.

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The lottery now leases its equipment from Control Data under a contract that expires in July. But Martin M. Puncke, the lottery director, said yesterday his agency decided it could save money by buying the computer systems and 1,200 sales terminals.

Under the new five-year contract, the state will buy the computer equipment for \$9.1 million. It also will pay Control Data \$13.3 million to operate and service the system.

American Totalisator Company, the competing bidder, came in nearly \$5 million higher. But an American Totalisator representative charged yesterday that his firm was at a disadvantage in preparing its bid because lottery officials had talked extensively with Control Data this year about buying the computer equipment under an option in the current contract.

The lottery officials "stepped far over the bounds and if this is approved, you are going to set a precedent for state agencies to play games for years to come," said Judson P. Garrett, the American Totalisator lawyer and former chief legal adviser to Governor Hughes.

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Mr. Hughes, however, voted with the board's other two members, Comptroller

Louis L. Goldstein and Treasurer William S. James, to approve the deal with Control Data.

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"I think maybe the process could have been a little better, but I don't think there is enough evidence here to convince me that there was any impropriety... or that any bidder was unduly disadvantaged," the governor said.

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Authorized the state's purchase of about 195 miles of railroad lines on the Eastern Shore for \$9.3 million.

The state has been leasing the rail lines, formerly a part of the Penn Central system, since 1976 at an annual cost of more than \$1 million. The freight lines, which are used for hauling such bulk cargo as coal, grain and fertilizer, are considered vital to the economy of the

Eastern Shore.

State operating costs for the lines, kept low in the past by federal subsidies, are expected to climb rapidly with the end of federal support. Lowell K. Bridwell, state Secretary of Transportation, said the state's operating costs were \$32,000 last fiscal year, but should reach \$360,000 this year and \$488,000 next year.