

# ***FINGER LAKES*** ***TIMES*** ***ONLINE***

**Ontario approves leasing landfill *Friday, September 05, 2003***

**By ANDREA DECKERT Times Staff Writer**

CANANDAIGUA — Ontario County could receive more than \$100 million from a Vermont company that may lease its landfill and recycling facility.

The county's Solid Waste Management Committee yesterday unanimously approved a resolution to lease the facility in Flint to Casella Waste Systems of Rutland, Vt., for 25 years, starting Jan. 1.

"County residents will benefit greatly from this plan," said Canandaigua Supervisor David Baker, chairman of the Solid Waste Management Committee. "This will get (the county) out of the hassle of running the landfill but will allow us to still make some good money from it."

According to Casella's proposal, the company will pay the county roughly \$17 million up front and another \$2 million each year for the duration of the lease. When the 13-acre planned expansion is complete, Casella will give the county another \$18 million.

In addition, Casella will give the county 25 percent of all the revenue it receives when the average tipping fees in the marketplace exceed \$34 per ton. The company also has plans for roughly \$15 million in economic development projects, including water and sewer lines and possible new businesses that would locate to the site, as well as plans for an e-waste recycling program for electronic equipment.

The deal also locks in the tipping fee county municipalities pay at \$26 per ton. Under the agreement, the county will still own the facility, including the permit from the state Department of Environmental Conservation.

The company will retain the 20 employees currently working for the county at the site, Baker said.

He called Casella's proposal "creative and innovative" and said it covered three topics that concerned county officials: job protection for the solid waste employees; set tipping fees for county garbage; and a fair market price for the lease and the upfront payment.

Baker added the company said it could fill the current site, with the expansion, over the lease period without having to buy additional land and will use landscaping to disguise the site from the road.

"They said when the landscaping is through, it will be hard to tell that a landfill is there," Baker said.

The entire Board of Supervisors must approve the lease agreement. The resolution will be called to the floor at the board's Sept. 11 meeting, but likely laid over until the Oct. 2 meeting so the public can have more time to speak on the matter and so the Seneca Town Board will have time to negotiate a host agreement with the company.

Right now, the idea of leasing the solid waste operation could be a tough sell to some county residents, especially those on the eastern side of the county who are concerned about increased truck traffic, noise, odor and other pollution that could come if the company takes in the maximum amount of garbage — 2,000 tons per day — allowed under the DEC permit. The county traditionally has accepted about 1,000 tons of trash daily.

Manchester Supervisor Bill Eddinger, who chairs the county Financial Management Committee, said staff have begun reviewing how the money will be used and will present a plan to the finance committee at its meeting at the end of the month.

Casella will give a presentation on its plan for the 300-plus acre site at 7 p.m. Monday at the Safety and Training Facility on County Road 48 in Hopewell, which will be followed by a question and answer period.

Casella has run the landfill in Schuyler Falls, Clinton County, in the northeast corner of the state, since 1995 when that county was facing a deficit at the facility and looking for financial relief.

Casella was one of three companies interviewed in Ontario County.

County officials pursued the idea of leasing the facility after they learned that the landfill could be in the red in the next few years.