



**County Administrator**

Courthouse, Room 110  
225 W. Olive Street  
Newport, Oregon 97365  
(541) 265-4100  
FAX (541) 265-4176

January 30, 2023

City Manager, Heide Lambert  
City of Yachats  
PO Box 345  
Yachats, Oregon 97498

Via email: [citymanager@yachatsmail.org](mailto:citymanager@yachatsmail.org)

Dear Ms. Lambert,

The purpose of this letter is to request to be on your City Council agenda for February 15, 2023 to present a new "Pilot Project" for the abatement of abandoned RV's and trailers in the County and specifically in support to the City of Yachats.

The County Waste Management District has culled together funding to initiate this pilot project.

The opportunity is to provide your city with a \$20,000 credit to be used for the removal of identified abandoned RV's and/or trailers by your city over the next year.

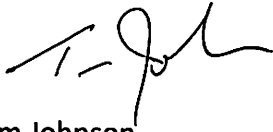
The only thing that is being asked is that your city perform the identification of the vehicle(s) and subsequent code enforcement actions needed to remove it.

This pilot project was approved by the Board of Commissioners at its January 25<sup>th</sup> meeting. The staff report and emphasis of the program is attached.

We would like to make a 5-to-10-minute presentation before your City Council. Should your City Council like to participate, we ask that they make a motion to approve the participation in the Abandoned RV Abatement Pilot Program.

Paul Seitz, the County's Waste Management manager will be presenting and be joined by myself and a County Commissioner at the presentation.

In the meantime, should you have any questions or directions, I am available at your convenience.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Johnson', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Tim Johnson  
County Administrator

Attachment: County Staff Report.

## STAFF REPORT

**DATE:** January 19, 2022  
**TO:** Board of Commissioners, January 25, 2023, Meeting  
**FROM:** Paul Seitz, Solid Waste District Manager, extension number x1285  
**SUBJECT:** Abandoned RV Abatement Program Proposal

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### **RECOMMENDATION:**

Approve the establishment of a RV Abatement Program, to be initially funded through a one-time transfer of \$500K from the contingency line item of Solid Waste District Reserves.

### **FISCAL IMPACTS:**

Abandoned RV's which are often found in County Parks and along the public right-of-way pose an immediate threat to General Fund and Road Fund. Neither General Fund nor the Road Fund have dedicated monies for the high cost of abandoned RV removal. Absent another funding source, these funds would have to draw down from other budget areas.

The Lincoln County Waste District currently has reserves which could fund a one-time support of a pilot abandoned RV cleanup program. The District has built up reserves from its \$4 per ton disposal fee over several years from a spike in tonnage. The spike came from the GP Toledo site clearing a mountain of stockpiled materials. Even though this spike in revenue ended at the beginning of FY 22-23, the District anticipates a continued revenue surplus from the newly constructed and experimental Juno plant at the GP site. The District's revenues and expenditures (even absent the GP and Juno revenues) are expected to remain operationally steady and consistent. A draw down of \$500K to fund RV abatement would still leave the District with 2 years of operational funding in reserve.

The one-time allocation is expected to enable a fast-response, community-wide RV abatement program to function through the end of FY 23-24. The Board may also choose to pare down the proposed scope of this proposal to spread the one-time funding over additional fiscal years. The District will also pursue grants, programs, and other potential sources to sustainably fund the program long-term.

### **BACKGROUND:**

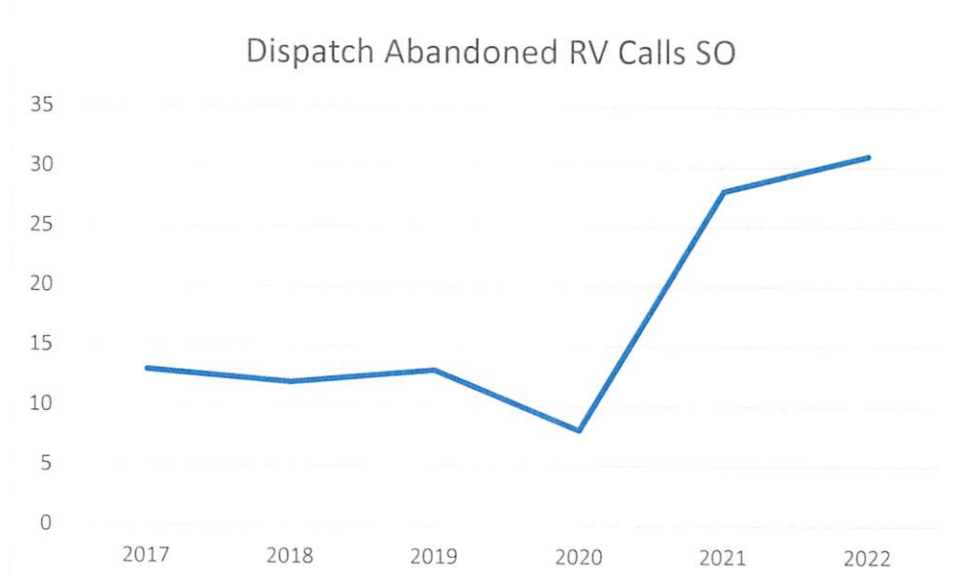
During the pandemic, abandoned dilapidated motorhomes, recreational vehicles, and travel trailers along with associated piles of debris and sewage sourced from once occupied now abandoned vehicles began to spring up along roads and on private property.

Many of these abandoned vehicles have found their way into the unincorporated areas of the County creating blight and probable public health issues. Many current issues contributed to this surge of RV's but there is one primary driving factor needed to address their abandonment – the issue of abatement of asbestos as a component of their manufacturing and repair.

As such, asbestos testing and abatement is necessary on all RV's older than 2004. It is prohibitively expensive (\$3K-\$15K) per vehicle depending on size, location, and the hazardous materials found onboard.

Additionally, the impact from either abandoned or discarded RV's has spurred the use of these vehicles as unsanctioned and unsanitary living units. Staff research has found that it is not uncommon to find property owners who have set up unsafe RV's as rental units on their land often in violation of environmental health, land use and building codes.

As such, community complaints about abandoned RV's and their associated debris fields have been on the rise. The chart below illustrates the number of complaints in Lincoln County.



Existing County department budgets, such as Public Works, Parks, Roads, Planning and Development and Sheriff's Office do not have funds to handle this influx of discarded RV's and to address the property owners in violation (often with multiple vehicles on their property).

Unfortunately, the property owners in violation are increasingly unable to afford removal of the RV's let alone to bring their property into compliance.

**DISCUSSION:**

In the effort to address this issue, a plan for a RV abatement fund has been formulated. It is anticipated that this plan and funding package will enable the removal of more than 50 RV's over the next year.

**Program Summary**

The RV Abatement Fund would be used to support five critical program areas:

- Remove abandoned RV's from public spaces such as County parks and specifically from public roadways which are not maintained by County. District anticipates this program element will use approximately 25% or approximately \$125,000 of the proposed funding. For example, while

writing this document, an RV was abandoned in Knight Park. The Abandoned RV Fund will enable an immediate response for its removal. In fall, a similar situation occurred in IchwhitPark, but the RV sat while funding and removal was being organized. The Ichwhit RV was set ablaze before the response could be implemented, complicating the cleanup, and causing minor damage to the park's parking lot.

- Provide funding to local cities to address associated RV issues within city limits per R-SWAC recommendation (attached). District anticipates this program element will use approximately 25% or an estimated \$20,000 per jurisdiction of the proposed funding. Since District funding is derived from disposal in both incorporated and unincorporated areas of the County, the local cities have requested a specific portion of RV abatement program funds be spent within city limits. Staff recommends an application process, where initially each city would have credit to pay for the removal of 2 abandoned RV's (again roughly \$20K per jurisdiction) from either public or private property within their jurisdiction. The District manager will present this proposal to each of the jurisdictions in the coming month and will be joined by either a Commissioner or County Administrator.
- Remove RV's from County maintained right-of-way. District anticipates this program element will use approximately 15% of the proposed funding. The Abandoned RV Fund will enable an immediate response for RV's abandoned along County maintained right-of-way, removing the road hazard, and again reducing the risk of the RV's being set ablaze while County forces organize a response.
- Provide opportunity for private property owners (including owners of private roads) to remove RV's in code violation from their property in exchange for a contractual commitment to 5-years of code compliance. District anticipates this program element will use approximately 25% of the proposed funding.
- *Enhance the Forest Enforcement Program funds to assist landowners with asbestos abatement on the abandoned RV's on their property. District anticipates this program element will use approximately 10% of the proposed funding.*

In all, the District anticipates an average of a removal of more than 1 RV per month will continue to impact County resources over the next two years.

***Estimated Cost of \$10,000 to Abate an RV or Trailer.***

The District would like to hire an immediate response contractor with the proposed funding.

Additionally, the District has outlined a cooperative plan with the Sheriff's Office to streamline RV removal once funding is secured. This will enable the County to quickly remove abandoned RV's and the hazards they pose to both our community and environment.

This short-term funding pilot proposal will also enable the County to demonstrate real-world success while looking for potential long term funding sources.

## **ATTACHMENT**

### **R-SWAC Proposal - October 2022**

The Regional Solid Waste Advisory Committee recommendation to the Lincoln County Board of Commissions:

“In Fiscal Year 2022-23, provide a one-time expenditure of \$100,000 from the Lincoln Solid Waste District contingency fund for the express support of local CITY code enforcement efforts related to removal of abandoned RV's and associated solid waste under the guidelines of the newly formed Hardship Property Debris Clearing Program. These funds are available to clear private property as well as remove RV's from the public ROW.”

“Opportunity to participate is to be available to all local cities equally, and the expenditure of funds be divided evenly between those cities where law enforcement provides valid candidates acceptable to BOC by the proposal deadline (TBD).”