

# TOWARDS A MORE RESPONSIBLE SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY FOR HARALSON COUNTY

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## OUR GOALS

The goals of the Haralson County Alliance for Responsible Waste Management Are:

1. Prevent Haralson County from becoming the home of the Solid Solutions landfill which would be the largest landfill in Georgia.
2. Reduce the harm done to those living near the Polk County landfill where Haralson County waste is presently dumped.
3. Turn waste into wealth via recycling to create more jobs and bolster the regional economy.

## LANDFILL IMPACTS

Aerials showing the location of the proposed Solid Solutions landfill and homes within two-miles of the 2,000-acre site can be found on the next page.

**Health & Landfill Air Pollution:** Scientific research has documented that the adverse health effects of landfill gases extend up to two miles from a landfill. These gases can cause [a slight increase](#) in cancer, birth defects and other more severe adverse health effects. A [2011 study](#) documented the following lesser, though nonetheless unacceptable adverse health effects are far more probable: odors so bad windows cannot be opened; burning eyes, nose and throat; headaches; nausea; and dizziness. The gas collection-treatment systems installed at modern landfills *may* reduce adverse health effects but to an unknown degree. Also, these systems have failed at Georgia landfills. A [2020 article](#) recounts such a failure at the Pine Bluff landfill in Cherokee County, GA.

**Well & Stream Pollution:** When water passes through decomposing landfill waste a toxic *leachate* is formed. [Research has documented 133 chemicals](#) in landfill leachate that can pose a threat to human and aquatic resource health. Georgia law requires locating landfills at least two miles from major water supply

wells. There may be 500 or more homes within two miles of the landfill proposed by Solid Solutions (*see map on next page*). Most of these homes are served by wells that could be vulnerable to contamination. To prevent contamination of ground and surface waters, modern landfills have impermeable caps, liners, leachate collection-treatment systems and monitoring wells. Since leachate may forever remain toxic, these systems must work for decades. Unfortunately, system failures do occur. A [2020 article](#) noted such a failure at a landfill near Augusta, GA.

**Property Value:** [Research has documented](#) that homes within two miles of major landfills, like that proposed by Solid Solutions, sell for 10% less than comparable homes not near a major landfill. Collectively, the 500 homes within two-miles of the proposed landfill could lose \$8.3 million in value and Haralson County could lose a half-million dollars a year in tax revenue.

**Polk County-Grady Road Landfill Impacts:** Most of the waste generated by Haralson County households and businesses goes to the Polk County Grady Road landfill. A [2019 article](#) documented the odors and other impacts suffered by those living near this landfill.

## MINIMIZING LANDFILL NEEDS

Up to 80% of waste can be diverted from landfills with source reduction, recycling, reuse and composting. [Georgia and other southeast states](#) have the largest concentration of industries in the U.S. that utilize recycled-composted materials as feed stock for manufacturing goods for sale. About 40% of the waste buried in the Solid Solutions landfill could serve as recycled feedstock. [One document](#) indicated the economic benefits of turning these recycled wastes into industrial feed stock would be:

- 493 jobs,
- \$25 million a year in personal income, and
- \$1.1 million annually in tax revenue!

## Haralson County Alliance for Responsible Waste Management

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## ZERO WASTE & WASTE TO WEALTH PLAN

The [current Haralson County Solid Waste Plan](#) is based on data and technology that is 20 years old. The plan expired in 2017. A number of U.S. cities and counties have set the goal of eliminating the need to landfill or incinerate waste over a period of ten- to twenty-years. [San Francisco is already at an 80% diversion rate](#) and many other jurisdictions have reached 50% or better. The existing Haralson transfer station could be upgraded to a green industry commerce park to attract industries utilizing recycled materials as feed stock. It is for these reasons that Haralson County should adopt a responsible solid waste plan that sets the goal of: greatly reducing the need to send waste to the Polk County or any other landfill and maximizing the number of jobs created in industries utilizing recycled materials as feed stock. These benefits can only be attained if the plan *does not* include the Solid Solutions landfill.

## ALLIANCE STRATEGY

We are seeking to provide the Board of County Commissioners with:

- The public support needed to say no to the megalandfill and yes to a Zero Waste plan,
- To help the County Commissioners legally say no in a way that Solid Solutions cannot reverse on appeal, and
- To assist in educating County residents about why recycling-composting is best for them and Polk County residents with the hope that this will provide the support our Commissioners need to put in place recyclable collection and other key programs.



## COUNTYWIDE SUPPORT GROWING

Thus far [1200 Haralson County residents](#) have pledged to support the County Commissioners in moving forward with the Zero Waste & Waste to Wealth plan described in this factsheet. The Haralson County Alliance for Responsible Waste Management has retained:

- [Community & Environmental Defense Services](#) and
- the Atlanta law firm of [Stack & Associates](#) to assist in carrying out this strategy.

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

Visit the Alliance webpage at: [ceds.org/hcarwm](https://ceds.org/hcarwm), then:

- Click the button along left side and sign the Alliance [petition](#), then
- Click the [Donate button](#) and join with many of your neighbors in providing the funds needed to preserve your quality of life and make your economic future more secure, and
- Urge your neighbors and acquaintances to do the same.

To learn more and see the scientific basis for the facts presented in this document:

- Visit the Alliance webpage at: [ceds.org/hcarwm](https://ceds.org/hcarwm), and
- View our 25-minute presentation at: <https://youtu.be/ebaOlynoFpY>.

