

## **Letter to the Editor**

In an effort to increase, recycling and decrease our carbon footprint it has been suggested that we switch to a single waste carrier for the whole city of Manitou Springs.

The logic being, that if all citizens were mandated to have a single recycling service they would recycle more and by contracting with one waste service there would be less trucks in the community thereby decreasing the wear and tear on the streets, fuel waste, exhaust and noise pollution, CO2 emissions, and pedestrian accidents and, presumably, our carbon footprint. While still preliminary, the cost of recycling would be folded into a single bill and passed on to the consumer along with an estimated additional \$2 per unit franchise fee which would generate \$48,000 for the city. Multi-family dwellings of seven units or more and commercial accounts would be exempt.

Like most people I am concerned about the environment, global warming and decreasing our carbon footprint and while the goals of this program are to be applauded and are well intended. I believe them to be misguided. I do not question the motivations of the advocates of this program nor do I question the impact of waste vehicles or the benefits of recycling.

What I do question, is the ability of contracting with a single waste contractor to reduce this impact and to significantly increase recycling.

Additionally, I am at odds with depriving our citizens their freedom of choice. In short, while the environmental concerns behind the movement for a single waste contractor are noble, I believe they will do nothing more than mandate that customers utilize an already available service and to pay an increased waste fee to add to the city's coffers, while failing to significantly achieve the programs desired results.

Currently all the waste contractors which service Manitou Springs offer single stream recycling options. As many customers already have, anyone wishing to participate in recycling can do so simply by adding the service to their current waste removal plan.

Those who do not elect to add single stream recycling can be assumed to have done so, not because they don't care about the environment, but because they can not justify the added expense.

In this recession where many are unemployed and coping with reduced incomes, family budgets are stretched to their limits. Mandating that citizens pay additional fees for recycling will adversely and disproportionately affect the poorest and most vulnerable members of our community by increasing their waste removal costs.

In a difficult rental market this proposal also places an increased burden on the owners of multi-family housing by placing additional costs on their all ready mounting service expenses, necessitating that they pass these costs on to their tenants or absorb the loss.

For a multi-family dwelling with six units this would represent additional costs of at least \$16 a month (\$2 franchise fee per unit and \$4 for recycling) for a total of almost \$200 annually (costs may actually be higher). Yet despite the increased charge and the provided recycling bins there are NO requirements or guarantees that people will choose to recycle.

Also it's quite likely that should this proposal pass, whoever gets this account will have to acquire additional equipment (trucks, etc.) to meet the increased hauling demands. Market logic would dictate that with the increased capital expenditures for this equipment, the selected waste removal company would seek to maximize its return on this equipment.

To do so they would utilize this new equipment as much as possible to offset their costs and to generate a profit.

The effect of employing this new equipment would be to increase the carbon footprint of those areas adjacent to Manitou Springs negating any carbon offset and possibly even increasing the overall carbon footprint for the region.

Nor can it be expected that contracting with a single waste remover will diminish the amount of waste trucks in our community or their impact on roads, safety, and the environment.

Commercial accounts represent one of the largest single reasons for waste trucks visiting our community. One commercial account with a restaurant often requires a minimum of five visits per week to remove trash.

Since commercial accounts and multi-family dwellings of seven or more are exempt under the proposal, if only one of these exemptions contract with a waste remover not contracted with the city, these same trucks will continue to come to the city as regularly as before.

What, of our freedom of choice? Are our citizens incapable of freely making rational decisions concerning their budgets and the environment? Should we next mandate that local restaurants contract with only one beer provider so that they minimize the number of beer trucks visiting our community?

We can have Budweiser, but not Coors, Miller or our local microbrews. Perhaps we should mandate that our citizens can no longer use FedEx or UPS and must use only the United States Postal Service to minimize the impact of delivery trucks?

I believe the proponents of the single waste removal company proposal, while motivated by good intentions, would be better served directing their time, energy, and money toward making the recycling option more efficacious and marketable to customers so they will elect voluntarily to recycle rather than being forced.

I have faith that my fellow citizens when given an effectual and cost-effective option will make the right decision, Of course, if the city still feels strongly about financing a single trash removal company and a mandated city-wide recycling program they can use the money from Kitty Clemen's vacated position to fund this program

**Sincerely,  
Eric Fredrickson**

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