

T-3.5
SWANA TECHNICAL POLICY

**ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND EQUITY DECISIONS IN THE SITING OF
MUNICIPAL SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT FACILITIES**

I. Policy

SWANA, as an organization of municipal solid waste management professionals, supports the following policy relative to the siting of municipal solid waste management (MSWM) facilities:

- Land use planning and local zoning rules and regulations should be the basis for siting municipal solid waste management facilities.
- Racial, ethnic, cultural or economic characteristics of a community or neighborhood should not be a reason to either justify, or deny, the siting of a municipal solid waste management facility.
- Siting decisions for municipal solid waste management facilities should be made based on science and actual impacts.

Once siting has been achieved, environmental rules and regulations should be used to assure the protection of human health and the environment when designing, constructing and operating municipal solid waste management facilities.

II. Discussion

Within the municipal solid waste management field, the siting of municipal solid waste management facilities including transfer stations, landfills, waste-to-energy facilities, compost facilities and materials recovery facilities (MRFs) foster debate on the question of environmental equity. This debate centers around charges that there is a perceived inequitable distribution of municipal solid waste management facility sites based on racial, ethnic, cultural or economic considerations. Whether valid or not, the perception of certain groups is that they are victims of environmental inequities due to the presence of MSWM facilities within their jurisdictions or neighborhoods.

SWANA does not support any policy that would use the racial, ethnic, cultural or economic characteristics of a community or neighborhood to justify the siting, or denial of siting, of a MSWM facility. SWANA, as a professional society, supports siting decisions that are based on science and technical land use and zoning conditions. These conditions should be the basis for siting MSWM facilities.

Further, SWANA believes that the following principles should be followed in the siting and presence of MSWM facilities:

- All municipal solid waste management facilities should comply with all applicable environmental laws and regulations. Local, provincial, state and national rules and regulations need to be followed in the design, construction and operation of all municipal solid waste management facilities.
- Open and informed dialogue between citizens, local governments and private service providers about municipal solid waste facility siting decisions should be faithfully pursued.

Approved by the Executive Committee on September 20, 1996.

Mark D. Hammond
International Secretary

Dated October 25, 1996