

Regarding Tom Jackson's "Hillsborough Trash Surprise Echoes Here" column (Feb. 19), it is fortunate for the citizens of Pasco County that neither he nor the landfill applicant is responsible for crunching the solid waste disposal numbers in our county.

The range of disposal rates proposed by his preferred applicant varies 100 percent (\$35 to \$70 per ton), which we believe is reflective of the uncontrolled cost increases Pasco citizens will see from this private company.

Since Jackson is not a resident of Pasco County, he would not know that the county officials responsible for managing our Shady Hills waste-to-energy facility have such sharp pencils that Progress Energy is paying our taxpayers \$16 million for electricity in 2008, and this increases annually to \$40 million by 2024 for just the existing plant. (This is prior to any expansion.)

Additionally, the disposal rates have been steady for the life of the plant. Jackson's applicant was at the county meeting where these revenue and cost numbers were discussed, but they apparently choose to ignore the real facts.

And we agree there is something to be said about publicly traded companies like Covanta or Tampa Tribune/Media General that are listed on major stock exchanges like the New York Stock Exchange. They have a significantly higher level of governmental and public scrutiny of their businesses to do the right thing.

A privately held company like the one Jackson supports prefers to operate without the same level of scrutiny.

The recent Florida Department of Environmental Protection citation they received for dumping Class 1 waste in their Class 3 dump is just a reflection of what we believe will be a continued laissez-faire operational attitude near the Green Swamp and our sensitive drinking water supplies. In this case they were caught, but their retort is it was "just a minor oversight" on their part, "trust us."

We believe Pasco County will be much better served by an experienced solid waste disposal company using modern, proven solid waste technology for our future.

CARL ROTH
Protectors of Florida's Legacy