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Covanta Fairfax and Fairfax County Partner with Local American Legion Post for U.S. Flag Retirement Program

Lorton, VA (December 5, 2018) – Covanta Fairfax and the Fairfax County Department of Public Works in partnership with American Legion Post 177, have launched a U.S. flag retirement program to reverently dispose of old, worn American flags.

While many veteran organizations have flag collection programs in place, the quantity of retired American flags they receive can be overwhelming and alarmingly, Fairfax County employees have been finding an increasing number of improperly disposed flags in the waste stream.

To solve this problem and provide an outlet for the honorable disposal of American flags, Fairfax County's Department of Public Works has placed collection boxes at the I-66 Transfer Station, I-95 Landfill, Fairfax County Government Center and local police stations for flag drop off by citizens of Fairfax County. Flags will be collected free of charge and prepared for retirement in the customary manner and in accordance with U.S. flag code by the American Legion Post 177 with the assistance of the Boy Scout of America Troop 1887. Prepared flags will be retired at Covanta Fairfax in the customary manner and in accordance with guidance from the American Legion.

To mark the first delivery of prepared flags, Covanta Fairfax hosted a formal flag retirement ceremony that was led by Jeff White, Commander at American Legion Post 177 and attended by Fairfax County Supervisor Daniel G. Storck, Deputy Director of Fairfax County Public Works and Environmental Services John Kellas, representatives of Boy Scouts Troop 1887 and local veterans.

Local leaders and partners praised the collaborative initiative stating:

Congressman Gerry Connolly (D-VA):

"This new partnership between Fairfax County, the American Legion and Covanta is a wonderful example of the public and private sector coming together for a great cause. Having attended a flag retirement ceremony at Post 177, I can attest to the hard work the Post members put in to properly and honorably dispose of American flags that are past their useful life. Disposing of the American flag can be a difficult thing and this new partnership will give Fairfax County residents new options to dispose of their flags in accordance with the Flag Code. I thank Covanta for the generous use of their facility and wish this new effort great success."

Fairfax County Supervisor Daniel G. Storck (D-Mount Vernon):

"As a former Boy Scout, I vividly remember the importance and ceremony of properly retiring flags. This partnership is an excellent example of Covanta working with our community, honoring our heritage and engaging with our young citizens."

Commander Jeff White, American Legion Post 177:

“Every year around a thousand American flags are brought to us for proper retirement and disposal. For years Post 177 has been retiring these flags and burning them in accordance with Title 4, Chapter 1 of US Code. Partnering with Covanta and Fairfax County will allow us to continue this important mission in a safer and more environmentally friendly way. As veterans, the flag holds an important place in our hearts and knowing that the older flags we collect will be treated with respect and dignity is invaluable. We thank Covanta and the County for supporting what will surely be a very successful program.”

John Kellas, Deputy Director, Fairfax County Deputy Director of Public Works:

“It is wonderful that this process was initiated by our front line employees with a desire to see the flags retired the proper way and we were able to form a great partnership with the American Legion and Covanta to honor this national symbol of liberty, sacrifice and pride.”

Don Cammarata, Business Manager at Covanta Fairfax:

“We are honored to assist the American Legion Post 177 to honorably retire the large amount of U.S. flags they receive. At Covanta, we hold our veterans in the highest regard and are steadfast in our dedication to these true American heroes. In fact, as an organization, 15 percent of our U.S. workforce is comprised of veterans.”

Covanta Fairfax provides sustainable waste management services to a population of 900,000 in the Washington, D.C. suburbs of Fairfax County. Located in Lorton, Virginia, the Energy-from-Waste facility processes approximately 3,000 tons of municipal solid waste per day to generate 80 megawatt of clean, renewable energy – enough to power 80,000 homes.

About Covanta

Covanta is a world leader in providing sustainable waste and energy solutions. Annually, Covanta’s modern Energy-from-Waste facilities safely convert approximately 22 million tons of waste from municipalities and businesses into clean, renewable electricity to power one million homes and recycle over 600,000 tons of metal. Through a vast network of treatment and recycling facilities, Covanta also provides comprehensive industrial material management services to companies seeking solutions to some of today’s most complex environmental challenges. For more information, visit covanta.com.