



Waste Management to Appeal Verdict in Defamation Lawsuit

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Waste Management says it will appeal a \$25.5 million judgment against the company made by a Texas jury last week in a defamation lawsuit filed by Texas Disposal Systems.

Texas Disposal Systems filed the lawsuit in 1997, claiming that Waste Management had false and defamatory statements about Texas Disposal as the two companies were competing for landfill contracting from the city of Austin, Texas. Six years later, a jury agreed with Texas Disposal's allegation but awarded the firm no damages. In 2006, a Texas appeals court ordered the case retried.

Last week, a Harris County, Texas, jury sided with Texas Disposal and ordered Waste Management to pay \$5.45 million in actual damages and \$20 million in exemplary damages.

"[Texas Disposal] is very pleased to have had the opportunity to fairly present its case and to see justice prevail," said Bob Gregory, CEO of Texas Disposal, in a statement. "We hope Waste Management's board of directors will receive the jury's apparent message concerning the acceptable limits of fair competitive practices."

In a statement released on Wednesday, Waste Management said, "Significant errors by the court lead to the verdict and Waste Management is confident that the Court of Appeals and/or the Texas Supreme Court will overturn it."

Waste Management "is very disappointed by this decision," said Don Smith, area vice president for WM of South Texas. "We will be seeking prompt relief from the trial court and are prepared to appeal this award to the highest level."