



January 21, 2020

The Honorable Ben Allen, Chair
 Senate Environmental Quality Committee
 California State Legislature
 Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Need to Include Diverted Organic Waste Funding in Bond Legislation

Dear Senator Allen:

We are writing to urge you to include significant funding for organic waste diversion and recycling in your pending climate resilience bond legislation. Organic waste diversion is a critical requirement of the state’s climate policies and one of the most cost-effective ways to reduce climate-forcing/global warming. Organic waste that is not recycled emits methane, which has far more immediate and powerful warming impacts than carbon dioxide (methane emissions are 74 times more damaging than carbon dioxide). As a result, reducing methane emissions from organic waste helps the climate immediately.

Beyond these emissions impacts, converting local organic waste into local energy supplies will also increase Community Resilience and energy security. Unfortunately, the Governor's proposed budget and climate bond only include \$15 million for organic waste diversion projects. We urge the Legislature, therefore, to include \$500 million for diverted organic waste projects in bond legislation this year.

California's climate policies require that we do a better job of recycling our organic waste, but don't provide sufficient funding to support implementation. Senate Bill 1383 (Lara, 2016) requires that, by 2025, California divert 75 percent of organic landfill waste – 15 million tons per year - and puts that waste to beneficial use. The highest and best use of most organic waste is to convert it to energy and use the byproducts – compost, biosolids, or biochar – to produce fertilizer and other products that return carbon and other nutrients to the soil (which also contributes to soil health and sequesters carbon). According to the Legislative Analyst's Office, organic waste diversion is the single most cost-effective investment the state can make to reduce carbon emissions, less than one-tenth the average cost of carbon reductions funded by the state's Cap and Trade program.¹

Converting organic waste to energy also builds Community Resilience because every community generates organic waste that can be used to produce local low carbon (or even carbon-negative) energy supplies. Diverted organic waste can be used to produce biogas for electricity generation, backup generators, transportation fuels, energy storage, grid reliability, and renewable hydrogen for fuel cells. Bioenergy can also provide dispatchable power needed when solar or wind power are not available. Bioenergy also increases the reliability of microgrids because it can be stored, provide power around the clock, and provide a source of renewable hydrogen for fuel cells.

To meet the requirements of SB 1383, CalRecycle estimates that California will need to build 100 or more new facilities that can convert organic waste into energy and compost or biochar. Additionally, there are existing facilities such as anaerobic digesters at wastewater treatment plants, that can be modified or expanded to accommodate the acceptance and processing of organic waste which provide the same benefits.

Meeting California's 2025 deadline will require significant funding – estimated at \$2-3 billion -- to jumpstart development of these facilities. With all of the public benefits that will result and the rapidly approaching deadline, organic waste diversion infrastructure should be included in the bond measure.

¹ LAO Report on Cap & Trade revenues, presented to Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 3 on April 20, 2016.

For all these reasons, we urge you to include \$500 million for diverted organic waste in bond legislation. This funding will provide the most cost-effective carbon reductions, reduce one of the most damaging climate pollutants, and build Community Resilience and energy security.

Sincerely,

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