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LOS ANGELES COUNTY  
SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE/  
INTEGRATED WASTE MANAGEMENT TASK FORCE  
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May 8, 2013

The Honorable Jeff Gorell  
State Capitol, Room 6031  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Assembly Member Gorell:

**ASSEMBLY BILL 794, INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 21, 2013: EXEMPTION FROM CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT FOR WASTE-RELATED PROJECTS**

The Los Angeles County Solid Waste Management Committee/Integrated Waste Management Task Force (Task Force) **opposes** Assembly Bill 794 (AB 794) as introduced on February 21, 2013. If enacted, AB 794 would provide a categorical exemption from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for certain types of projects that use landfill materials (undefined) or organic waste to produce energy or soil-amendment products from that waste material.

The Task Force strongly supports the development of innovative bioenergy projects, such as conversion technologies, that would reduce our dependence on landfill disposal and provide alternative ways of generating energy, fuels, and other useful products from materials that might otherwise be disposed. However, the Task Force has strong concerns from providing a categorical exemption for such projects from CEQA.

Pursuant to Chapter 3.67 of the Los Angeles County Code and the California Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989 (Assembly Bill 939 [AB 939], as amended), the Task Force is responsible for coordinating the development of all major solid waste planning documents prepared for the County of Los Angeles and the 88 cities in Los Angeles County with a combined population in excess of ten million. Consistent with these responsibilities and to ensure a coordinated, cost-effective, and environmentally sound solid waste management system in Los Angeles County, the Task Force also addresses issues impacting the system on a countywide basis. The Task Force membership includes representatives of the League of California Cities-Los Angeles County Division, County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors, City of Los Angeles, waste management industry, environmental groups, the public, and a number of other governmental agencies.

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CEQA was established to disclose environmental impacts, prevent or reduce negative environmental impacts, disclose agency decisions, promote interagency coordination, and encourage public participation. A categorical exemption for the type of projects identified by the proposed legislation would reduce the level of transparency between local governments, project proponents, and the public as well as potentially placing our natural resources such as groundwater and air at risk.

AB 794 seeks to provide a categorical exemption from the requirements of CEQA for projects that take landfill materials or organic wastes and convert them into energy as long as they result in a net reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and/or support sustainable agriculture. AB 794 would also exempt facilities that use biological processes to convert organic waste streams into nonchemical soil fertility projects that support renewable/reusable cultivation. Providing such a broad exemption simply based on one or two general aspects of a potential project, such as a net reduction of GHG emissions, would fail to sufficiently protect the public and the environment from other potentially significant impacts that may result from such projects, does not provide decision makers with a comprehensive evaluation of such impacts, and reduces the opportunity for the public and other key stakeholders to review and provide input on such impacts. Therefore, the Task Force **opposes** AB 794.

If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Mike Mohajer of the Task Force at [MikeMohajer@yahoo.com](mailto:MikeMohajer@yahoo.com) or at (909) 592-1147.

Sincerely,



Margaret Clark, Vice-Chair  
Los Angeles County Solid Waste Management Committee/  
Integrated Waste Management Task Force and  
Council Member, City of Rosemead

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cc: Each Member of the Los Angeles County Legislative Delegation  
Each Member of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors  
California State Association of Counties  
League of California Cities  
League of California Cities. Los Angeles County Division  
San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments  
South Bay Cities Council of Governments  
San Fernando Valley Council of Governments  
Gateway Cities Council of Governments  
Westside Cities Council of Governments  
Each City Mayor and City Manager in the County of Los Angeles  
Each City Recycling Coordinator in Los Angeles County  
Each Member of the Los Angeles County Integrated Waste Management Task Force