



GAIL FARBER, CHAIR
MARGARET CLARK, VICE - CHAIR

LOS ANGELES COUNTY
SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE/
INTEGRATED WASTE MANAGEMENT TASK FORCE
900 SOUTH FREMONT AVENUE, ALHAMBRA, CALIFORNIA 91803-1331
P.O. BOX 1460, ALHAMBRA, CALIFORNIA 91802-1460
www.lacountyiswmtf.org

April 16, 2012

The Honorable Dave Camp, Chair
House Committee on Ways and Means
1102 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Camp:

SUPPORT - HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES BILL 66 (INTRODUCED JANUARY 5, 2011) WASTE TO ENERGY TECHNOLOGY ACT OF 2011

The Los Angeles County Solid Waste Management Committee/Integrated Waste Management Task Force (Task Force) **supports** H.R. 66, the Waste-to-Energy Technology Act of 2011. The proposed legislation would amend Internal Revenue Code to provide a 30 percent tax credit to investors of “qualified waste-to-energy property,” as defined. The Bill defines “qualified waste-to-energy property” as a property comprising a system which uses municipal solid waste or municipal sewage sludge as the feedstock for producing solid, liquid, or gas fuel, or for producing energy.

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 and 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.

The Bill would define “qualified waste-to-energy property” to mean a property comprising a system which uses municipal solid waste (MSW) or municipal sewer sludge as the feedstock for producing solid, liquid, or gas fuel and is certified by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Secretary. We sincerely applaud efforts to pass legislation that would advance the development of renewable energy in the United

States, and consider MSW to be a resource rather than a liability. This bill proposes a major shift in public policy that may have significant benefits to the environment while simultaneously spurring the development of green jobs.

According to the United States EPA, our Country sends over 135 million tons of solid waste to landfills each year, with over 50 percent of that material being organic. This represents a plentiful resource that can be utilized to significantly diversify transportation fuels and energy resources. Non-incineration technologies such as conversion technologies (CT) capable of converting MSW into renewable energy and biofuels, have made significant strides in development over the last decade.

For over a decade the Task Force has been a consistent supporter of CTs and has advocated for their development in Los Angeles County. The Task Force along with other entities, including the County of Los Angeles, have extensively evaluated various CTs from around the world and concluded that these technologies can fundamentally change the way we manage waste.

The Task Force supports CTs because of the following benefits:

1. **Conversion technologies create green collar jobs and spur the economy –** Development of CT facilities would create a range of new, high-tech jobs, and contribute to the local economy by creating new, state-of-the-art, advanced infrastructure.
2. **Conversion Technologies decrease net air emissions and greenhouse gases –** On a net basis, CTs can actually produce cleaner air by offsetting higher emissions from other sources, such as coal power plants or petroleum extraction, refining and combustion. A report commissioned by the California Air Resources Board (CARB) has found that widespread adoption of CTs in California has the potential to reduce GHG emissions by nearly five million metric tons by displacing the need for fossil fuels. The subject report which was prepared by the CARB's Economic and Technology Advancement Advisory Committee lists conversion technologies as one of the key climate change solutions for California.
3. **Conversion technologies produce renewable energy and green fuels, thereby reducing our dependence on foreign oil –** CTs produce fuel and/or energy, thereby promoting energy independence. By utilizing CTs, the Country can develop clean, locally produced renewable energy and green fuels such as ethanol and biodiesel. Benefits from this independence include insulating residents from energy market fluctuations and avoiding environmental impacts associated with extraction, refining, transportation, and combustion of fossil fuels.

4. **Conversion technologies are an effective and environmentally preferable alternative to landfills** – Based on reports developed by CalRecycle (formerly known as the California Integrated Waste Management Board), the County of Los Angeles and other independent agencies, CTs are environmentally preferable to land disposal practices. Copies of these reports are available at www.SoCalConversion.org. As landfill costs and transportation costs continue to rise, CTs are becoming more and more cost-effective in comparison.
5. **Conversion technologies manage materials that are not practically recyclable and at the same time create an incentive to increase recycling** – Not all solid waste currently generated can be recycled or composted. Contaminated organic material, higher number plastics and other non-compostable organic materials, which cannot be recycled or processed in an economically feasible manner, are ideal feedstock for CTs. At the same time, inorganic materials including glass, metals, and aggregate have no value for CTs, and therefore create an incentive to separate and recover those materials for recycling prior to the conversion process.

The County of Los Angeles is currently supporting the development of multiple CT projects that would combine highly-efficient sorting and recycling operations with a CT system, ensuring that materials are used for beneficial purposes rather than landfill disposal. Over 20 sites have been identified in the County as potential project locations.

In 2010, the Task Force supported Congressman Doggett's H.R. 5856, a previous legislative attempt at incentivizing waste-to-energy investment and energy independence, which unfortunately did not make it out of Committee. We are optimistic that the Congressional Ways and Means Committee will see the multifaceted value in this legislation and will not let H.R. 66 suffer the same fate.

For the reasons discussed above, the Task Force **supports H.R. 66**. If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Mike Mohajer of the Task Force at MikeMohajer@yahoo.com or (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

The Honorable Dave Camp

April 16, 2012

Page 4

cc: Each Member of the House Committee on Ways and Means
Each Member of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors
Each City Mayor and City Manager in the County of Los Angeles
Each Member of the Los Angeles County Integrated Waste Management Task Force
Each Member of the Alternative Technology Advisory Subcommittee
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