



LOS ANGELES COUNTY
SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE/
INTEGRATED WASTE MANAGEMENT TASK FORCE
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GAIL FARBER
CHAIR

June 15, 2009

Congressman Henry Waxman
30th District, California
2204 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Congressman Ed Markey
7th District, Massachusetts
2108 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressmen:

SUPPORT FOR HOUSE RESOLUTION 2454 (WAXMAN-MARKEY): THE AMERICAN CLEAN ENERGY AND SECURITY ACT OF 2009 – INTRODUCED MAY 15, 2009

The Los Angeles County Solid Waste Management Committee/Integrated Waste Management Task Force (Task Force) **supports** House Resolution (HR) 2454, which if enacted has the potential to create millions of green-collar jobs nationwide, promote energy independence, increase energy efficiency, and reduce pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. We are pleased that HR 2454 identifies “qualified waste-to-energy” as a renewable energy source, subject to certain provisions. HR 2454 defines qualified waste-to-energy as “energy from the combustion of municipal solid waste or construction, demolition, or disaster debris, or from the gasification or pyrolyzation of such waste or debris and the combustion of the resulting gas at the same facility”, subject to meeting specified requirements.

Pursuant to Chapter 3.67 of the Los Angeles County Code and the California Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989 (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 10 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, the County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors, the City of Los Angeles, the waste management

industry, environmental groups, the public, and a number of other governmental agencies

We sincerely applaud your efforts to sponsor legislation that would advance the development of renewable energy in the United States, and consider municipal solid waste as a resource to aid us in this effort rather than a liability. This is a major shift in public policy that may have significant benefits to the environment while spurring the development of green jobs. Our research has found that, in addition to pyrolysis and gasification, there are many other solid waste conversion technologies capable of converting residual solid waste into marketable products, green fuels and clean, renewable energy. Conversion technologies include biological processes such as anaerobic digestion and chemical processes such as acid hydrolysis in addition to thermal processes other than incineration. We request that you expand the scope of the legislation as it moves forward in the legislative process to account for the significant promise of these unique technologies to produce renewable energy, reduce our dependence on imported oil, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

For over a decade the Task Force has been a consistent supporter of conversion technologies. Conversion technologies are processes that extract valuable resources and create renewable energy from solid waste. Conversion technologies may be thermal, chemical or biological but are not incinerators – there's no combustion of the waste. Over 130 operating facilities are successfully processing solid waste in Europe and Japan; however no commercial facility has been constructed in the United States. The Task Force along with other entities, including the City and the County of Los Angeles, have extensively evaluated various conversion technologies from around the world, and concluded that these technologies can fundamentally change the way we manage waste.

The Task Force would like to emphasize the following demonstrated benefits of conversion technologies:

- 1. Conversion technologies create green collar jobs and spur the economy** - Conversion technologies would create a range of new, high-tech jobs and contribute to the local economy by creating new advanced infrastructure.
- 2. Conversion technologies decrease net air emissions and greenhouse gases** - In February 2008, California Air Resources Board's Economic and Technology Advancement Advisory Committee (ETAAC) released its report entitled "*Technologies and Policies to Consider for Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions in California*". The ETAAC Report noted that by conservative estimates, conversion technologies have the potential to reduce annual greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by approximately five million metric tons of CO₂ equivalent in California. In

fact, the Task Force estimates the potential GHG reduction of conversion technologies may be three times greater, since conversion technologies have a simultaneous triple benefit to the environment: (1) reduction of transportation emissions resulting from long distance shipping of waste; (2) elimination of methane production from waste that would otherwise be landfilled; and (3) displacement of the use of fossil fuels by net energy (fuel and electricity) produced by conversion technologies.

3. **Conversion technologies produce renewable energy and green fuels, thereby reducing our dependence on foreign oil** – Conversion technologies produce fuel and/or energy. By utilizing conversion technologies, California and other states can develop clean, locally-produced renewable energy and green fuels, including ethanol, biodiesel, and electricity, which can be used to promote energy independence. Benefits from this independence include insulating residents from energy markets fluctuations, and avoiding environmental impacts associated with the extraction, refining, transportation, and combustion of fuels.
4. **Conversion technologies are an effective and environmentally preferable alternative to landfilling** - Based on reports developed by the State of California Integrated Waste Management Board, the County of Los Angeles, and other independent agencies, conversion technologies are environmentally preferable to land disposal practices. Copies of these reports are available at www.SoCalConversion.org. While economically the cost of utilizing conversion technologies may exceed current landfill disposal rates, disposal costs are expected to increase as landfill capacity declines within the coming decade. Development of conversion technologies is needed now to provide decision makers with environmentally preferable and economically viable options for the management of post-recycled waste materials.
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 disposed can be recycled or composted. Contaminated organic materials, higher number plastics and other materials, which cannot be recycled or processed in an economically feasible manner, are ideal feedstock for conversion technologies. At the same time, inorganic materials including glass, metals, and aggregate have no value for conversion technologies, and therefore create an incentive to separate and recover those materials for recycling prior to the conversion process.

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Currently underway, the Southern California Conversion Technology Demonstration Project, an endeavor spearheaded by Los Angeles County and the Task Force, seeks to develop a highly-efficient conversion technology facility onsite with a materials recovery facility (MRF). The conversion technology facility will complement the MRF by utilizing the residuals (the waste remaining after all recyclables are removed) for beneficial use rather than sending them to a landfill. The goal of this project is to demonstrate the technical, environmental and economic benefits of conversion technologies. Upon successful operation, the project would showcase the viability of these technologies and spur private investment.

The Task Force recognizes that HR 2454 is comprehensive energy legislation. It addresses clean energy, energy efficiency, reducing global warming pollution, and creating a clean energy economy. Therefore, the Task Force **supports** HR 2454, and respectfully requests that the scope of the proposed legislation be broadened to account for the full array of advanced conversion technologies. If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Mike Mohajer of the Task Force at (909) 592-1147.

Sincerely,

Margaret Clark

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

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P:\sec\task force\letter\TF Letter Support for HR2454

cc: Ms. Lisa Pinto, District Director, Congressman Henry Waxman
Each Member of the California Federal Legislative Delegation
California Assembly Member Anthony Adams
California Assembly Member Fiona Ma
Each Member of the County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors
Each City Mayor in the County of Los Angeles
California State Association of Counties
League of California Cities
Southern California Association of Governments
Each Member of the Los Angeles Integrated Waste Management Task Force
Each Member of the Alternative Technology Advisory Subcommittee
Each Recycling Coordinator in Los Angeles County