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SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE/
INTEGRATED WASTE MANAGEMENT TASK FORCE
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June 8, 2010

Senator John Kerry
Senator for Massachusetts
Second Floor
218 Russell Building
Washington D.C. 20510

Senator Joseph Lieberman
Senator for Connecticut
706 Hart Office Building
Washington, D.C 20510

Dear Senators:

**SENATE DISCUSSION DRAFT: THE AMERICAN POWER ACT
(AMENDED MAY 11, 2010)**

The Los Angeles County Solid Waste Management Committee/Integrated Waste Management Task Force (Task Force) **supports** the American Power Act (APA), which if enacted has the potential to create thousands of green-collar jobs nationwide, promote energy independence, increase energy efficiency, and reduce pollution and greenhouse gas emissions and respectfully request your consideration of amendments that would enhance the scope and impact of the legislation as it proceeds.

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. We would ask that, similarly to H.R. 2454, the APA should include municipal solid waste as a resource since many technologies exist to recover energy, fuels, and other beneficial products from this waste stream in an environmentally sensitive manner. By making this distinction, the APA would help spur the developments of these sophisticated technologies, already proven and successfully operating for many years throughout Europe and Japan, here in the United States. Conversion technologies can have many significant environmental benefits while spurring the development of green jobs. To enable these benefits, we respectfully request that you expand the definition of "renewable biomass" to specifically include *post-recycled* municipal solid waste (Section 44 on page 486).

Our research has found that, in addition to waste-to-energy, there are a variety of non-combustion 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. 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 such as (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.

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 the APA is comprehensive energy legislation that addresses clean energy, energy efficiency, reducing global warming pollution, and creating a clean energy economy. We believe that the scope of the legislation, as it moves forward in the legislative process to account for the significant promise of these unique technologies, supports and enhances the goal of the legislation to domestically

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produce renewable energy, reduce our dependence on imported oil, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Therefore, the Task Force **supports the American Power Act** 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, 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 California Federal Legislative Delegation
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National League of Cities
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
League of California Cities, Los Angeles County Division
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Each City Recycling Coordinator in Los Angeles County
Each Member of the Los Angeles County Integrated Waste Management Task Force
Each Member of the Alternative Technology Advisory Subcommittee