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February 9, 2011

The Honorable Jerry Brown
Governor of the State of California
State Capitol Building
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Brown:

CONVERSION TECHNOLOGIES: AN OPPORTUNITY TO ENHANCE OUR ENVIRONMENT, IMPROVE OUR ENERGY INDEPENDENCE, AND STIMULATE OUR ECONOMY

The Los Angeles County Integrated Waste Management Task Force (Task Force) would like to applaud you for your goal to produce 20,000 new megawatts of renewable electricity in California by 2020 through aggressively developing renewable energy at all levels such as small, onsite residential and business systems; intermediate-sized energy systems close to existing consumer loads and transmission lines; and large scale wind, solar, and geothermal energy systems. Not only will this create green-collar jobs and address the global climate crisis, but it will simultaneously reduce our dependence on foreign oil.

As your Administration sets out to achieve this goal, we would like to take the opportunity to share with you our efforts to evaluate and promote new solid waste conversion technologies and our findings after extensive research. Conversion technologies are non-combustion thermal, chemical, mechanical, and biological processes that are capable of converting post-recycled residual solid waste into useful products and chemicals, green fuels like ethanol and biodiesel, and clean renewable energy.

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 by the County and the 88 cities in the County of Los Angeles. Consistent with these responsibilities and to ensure a coordinated and cost-effective solid waste management system in the County of Los Angeles, the Task Force also addresses issues impacting the solid waste management 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.

The growing consensus from scientists, regulators, environmental protection agencies, local government officials, residents and businesses throughout California has identified conversion technologies as a critically needed infrastructure to meet California's long term environmental and renewable energy goals while jump-starting the economy. However, in order for these efforts to be successful, it is vital that a statewide framework is established for regulating and permitting new facilities.

Your environmental leadership in California has propelled our state to lead the nation in landmark policy decisions on energy efficiency, air quality, climate change, and environmental conservation. The Task Force would welcome the opportunity to share key information regarding these innovative conversion technology projects with your staff and discuss opportunities for us to collaborate in meeting the State's environmental goals while encouraging economic development.

Attached to this letter is background information regarding conversion technologies that your staff may find useful. We would appreciate if the appropriate staff would follow up with Mr. Mike Mohajer of the Task Force at (909) 592-1147 regarding this matter.

Sincerely,

Margaret Clark

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

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Enc.

cc: Gareth Elliott, Legislative Affair Secretary to the Office of the Governor
Mona Pasquil, Appointments Secretary to the Office of the Governor
Honorable John Laird, Secretary of Natural Resources Agency
Linda Adams, Acting Secretary of Cal/EPA
California Bioenergy Interagency Working Group
Each Member of the Los Angeles County Integrated Waste Management Task Force
Each Member of the Alternative Technology Advisory Subcommittee

FEBRUARY 9, 2011

WHAT ARE CONVERSION TECHNOLOGIES AND HOW CAN CALIFORNIA BENEFIT FROM THEM?

Each year over 40 million tons of solid waste is buried in landfills throughout California. This "waste" represents a tremendous, largely untapped resource that could be utilized in a beneficial way such as generating renewable energy and producing biofuels through conversion technologies. For the past decade the Los Angeles County Integrated Waste Management Task Force (Task Force), in coordination with local governments such as the County of Los Angeles (County), has supported the development of conversion technologies as an alternative to landfills.

Local Research and Project Development

In 2004 the Task Force and the County established the Alternative Technology Advisory Subcommittee (ATAS) with the purpose of evaluating and promoting the development of conversion technologies to reduce dependence on landfill disposal. The ATAS is comprised of a diverse group of stakeholders including representatives from cities, government agencies, utility companies, residential advisory committees, environmental experts, and solid waste industry representatives, which are all experts in the emerging field of conversion technologies.

Conversion technology facilities are operating successfully in Europe, Japan, and other advanced countries due to landfill restrictions and progressive recycling and environmental policies. Several states are in varying stages of commercializing these technologies; however, California has yet to construct a commercial facility. Legislative and regulatory roadblocks, low landfill tip fees, and lack of a comprehensive permitting framework have stifled development of this industry in our state. Nevertheless, several jurisdictions throughout California are moving forward with conversion technology evaluation and project development, including the Cities and Counties of Los Angeles, Santa Barbara, and San Diego and the Cities of Glendale, Sacramento and Salinas. On April 20, 2010, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors approved agreements to develop three conversion technology demonstration facilities with the goal of showcasing the technical, economic, and environmental viability of these technologies.

State's 2011 Bioenergy Action Plan

The State's Bioenergy Interagency Working Group, consisting of California's Natural Resources Agency, Air Resources Board, Water Resources Control Board, Energy Commission, Public Utilities Commission, Biomass Collaborative, and the Departments of Food & Agriculture, Forestry & Fire Protection, General Services, and Resources Recycling and Recovery, recently released the 2011 Bioenergy Action Plan, which concluded that these agencies should work collaboratively to "increase energy production from urban derived biomass." The Plan identified "statutory and inaccurate definitions that impede some conversion technologies for energy production, result in non-optimal technology choice, and limit opportunities to develop energy from municipal solid waste," which the agencies would work together to address.

Demonstrated Benefits

1. Conversion technologies can create green collar jobs and spur economic development

   Conversion technologies would create a range of new, high-tech jobs in scientific research and development, engineering, construction, and facility operations providing the highest number of jobs per Megawatt than any other form of renewable energy generation. These facilities must be built close to the feedstock and are designed for long-term operation of 20-30 years or more. As a result, they would establish high-quality, export-proof job stability in the local economy.

2. Conversion technologies can decrease net air emissions and greenhouse gases

   Numerous studies conducted regarding conversion technologies, including studies completed by State environmental agencies, have demonstrated their capabilities to reduce air emissions including greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. In February 2008, the 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 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 substantially 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 can produce renewable energy and green fuels, thereby reducing our dependence on foreign oil

   Conversion technologies produce fuel and energy. By utilizing conversion technologies, California can develop clean, locally-produced renewable energy and green fuels including ethanol, biodiesel, and electricity, which can be used to promote energy independence. It has also been shown that renewable energy provides extensive benefits to California citizens by insulating residents from energy markets' fluctuations and avoiding environmental impacts associated with the extraction, refining, transportation, and combustion of fossil fuels.

4. Conversion technologies are an effective and environmentally preferable alternative to landfilling

   Based on reports developed by the California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle), the County of Los Angeles, and other independent agencies, conversion technologies are environmentally preferable to land disposal practices. While 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 can 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. Most conversion technologies are also capable of recovering additional materials for recycling through the conversion process that would otherwise be disposed.

6. Conversion Technologies would help the state meet many of our renewable energy and environmental goals

   Conversion technologies represent one of the most effective ways to meet a variety of the State's most significant and ambitious environmental goals and policies including the Global Warming Solutions Act (AB 32), the Low Carbon Fuel Standard, the Renewable Portfolio Standard, and the BioEnergy Action Plan among others.

For more information, please visit www.SoCalConversion.org.