



Water Environment Federation and American Biogas Council partner on organic waste conversion

Two associations sign MOU to reaffirm their commitment to promoting use of energy and products produced from biogas.

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Waste Today Staff

The Washington-based associations, Water Environment Federation (WEF) and the American Biogas Council (ABC) are partnering to expand the conversion of organic waste into renewable energy and valuable soil products at facilities across the U.S.

Today there are more than 2,200 operating biogas facilities in the U.S. About 1,300 of them are at water resource recovery facilities, but there are nearly 4,000 water facilities where new biogas systems could be installed, the associations say. They add, there is a long history of using biogas as a reliable, renewable fuel source for electricity generation, heat, combined heat and power, and vehicle fuel.

WEF's recent publication "Accelerating Resource Recovery: Biosolids Innovations and Opportunities" is designed to provide a thorough review of biogas systems in the water sector. ABC launched the Digestate Certification Program that creates a standard method for describing the qualities of digestate, the product generated by anaerobic digestion of organic materials.

The organizations will continue to work together to promote resource recovery, specifically the use of energy and products produced from biogas systems at water facilities, they say. WEF and ABC reaffirmed these goals by signing a new memorandum of understanding (MOU).

"Energy derived from wastewater and biosolids moves our nation toward a more resilient and sustainable future, and there is tremendous potential for growth in the generation of these renewable resources" said WEF Executive Director Eileen O'Neill. "WEF is happy to once again

formalize our commitment to a broader and deeper working relationship with the American Biogas Council and we look forward to working with ABC in promoting opportunities for the beneficial use of biogas and digested residuals."

"A significant opportunity exists to utilize existing wastewater digester capacity to recycle organic materials, like the billions of pounds of food that Americans waste each year," said Patrick Serfass, Executive Director of the American Biogas Council. "In the U.S., we could build more than 13,000 new biogas systems. One-third of them can be built at water resource recovery facilities. These biogas projects will create jobs, investment and choices for generating energy, soil products and waste management. We're extremely pleased to continue our relationship with the Water Environment Federation under this MOU."

Specifically, WEF and ABC say they support:

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- The beneficial use of biogas, digested materials and biosolids as an economically and environmentally sound energy and waste management solution for communities;
- The use of proven technologies that facilitate energy and nutrient recovery;
- Encouraging federal and state legislation that promotes the use of biogas as a renewable energy source; proactive communications and public outreach to continue to build a strong base of support for products made from digested materials;
- Continued research and sound science in regards to biosolids management; and the development of state and federal regulations.

WEF and ABC say they believe that wastewater treatment plants are actually water resource recovery facilities that produce clean water and, through the use of biogas systems, yield renewable energy, recover nutrients (such as phosphorus and nitrogen) and produce valuable, nutrient-rich soil amendments that reduce the need for synthetic fertilizers. Biogas systems process organic materials- such as the solids, fats, oils, and grease removed by wastewater treatment- in controlled, fully-enclosed, natural biological systems that capture methane to create renewable electricity and fuel.

The statement of principals is available at http://americanbiogascouncil.org/pdf/ABC-WEF_statementOfPrinciples.pdf

