



DONALD L. WOLFE
CHAIRMAN

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

December 21, 2005

The Honorable Loni Hancock
Chair, Assembly Natural Resources Committee
State Capitol Room 4126
Sacramento, CA 94249-0014

Dear Chairwoman Hancock:

**COMMITTEE HEARING ON ASSEMBLY BILL 1090
AND CONVERSION TECHNOLOGIES**

On behalf of the Los Angeles County Solid Waste Management Committee/Integrated Waste Management Task Force (Task Force), I would like to thank you for convening a special hearing on Assembly Bill 1090 (AB 1090, Matthews introduced February 22, 2005) and conversion technologies in the City of Los Angeles on November 16, 2005. This hearing marked an important milestone in the future of solid waste management and conversion technology in California. We are excited to see mounting data that reaffirms the life-cycle benefits of conversion technologies. It is clear that a consensus has developed on the need to revise current State statutes to designate and accurately define conversion technologies apart from landfill disposal. That is why we hope to see unanimous approval of AB 1090 out of the Assembly Natural Resources Committee, so that it can be considered by the full legislature.

Pursuant to Chapter 3.67 of the Los Angeles County Code and the California Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989 (Assembly Bill 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 its 88 cities in Los Angeles County. Consistent with these responsibilities and to ensure a coordinated and cost-effective 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.

Conversion technologies have the ability to revolutionize solid waste management in California, for a variety of reasons. They are capable of converting a liability (waste) into a useful resource, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and other criteria pollutants, reducing dependence on landfilling and finite fossil fuels, and enhancing recycling efforts, all while exceeding California's strict environmental standards. As a leading panel of experts on local solid waste management issues, including our conversion technology specialists, the Task Force would like to emphasize the following demonstrated benefits of conversion technologies as reinforced by the testimony of scientists and technical experts participating in the hearing:

1. **Conversion technologies would decrease net air pollutant emissions and greenhouse gases** – Scientific studies, including those conducted by the Universities of California at Davis and Riverside under contract with the California Integrated Waste Management Board (CIWMB), have shown that conversion technologies will decrease air pollutant emissions and greenhouse gases that would otherwise result from disposal. Tests conducted at four pilot conversion technology facilities in the United States have shown that emissions from conversion technologies are far below established emission criteria in the U.S., California, Germany, and Japan.
2. **Conversion technologies would manage materials that are not practically recyclable** – 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.
3. **Development of conversion technology facilities would create an incentive to increase recycling** – Market impact studies have shown that conversion technologies are designed to process a post-recycled waste stream. Moreover, conversion technologies function better when recyclables such as glass and metal have been removed *prior* to conversion – thus conversion technologies would increase recycling by further extracting recyclables remaining after initial processing. That is why jurisdictions throughout California, including our Task Force, propose that conversion technology facilities process only feedstock remaining after recyclables have been source-separated or extracted at a materials recovery facility. Such pre-processing would have numerous additional life-cycle benefits, including:
 - reducing the need to transport post-recycled waste to disposal by up to 90 percent thereby reducing congestion, emissions, and other impacts
 - taking advantage of appropriate zoning already available at MRFs, which

- corresponds with our support of environmental justice
 - making use on site of readily available post-recycled feedstock that would otherwise be shipped for disposal
 - creating synergy for incentives to additional recycling, since MRFs can process and market additional recyclable materials pulled from the waste stream due to conversion pre-processing
4. **Conversion technologies are an effective and environmentally preferable alternative to landfilling** – Based on the recent report released by the California Integrated Waste Management Board, conversion technologies are environmentally preferable to land disposal practices. 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 would 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 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 California residents from market fluctuations, and avoiding environmental impacts associated with the extraction, refining, and transportation of fuels.
 6. **Conversion technologies would produce high-level “green collar jobs” and spur the economy** – Conversion technologies would create new, high tech jobs throughout the State and contribute to the local economy by creating new advanced infrastructure. For decades, California has led the rest of the nation by developing high-tech jobs based on new technologies, and has been a leader in new policies to protect the environment. By creating an environment that allows conversion technologies to develop on a level playing field, based on their relative economic and environmental impacts and benefits, California would lead the nation in solid waste management technologies, with far-reaching dividends for our future economic progress.

Jurisdictions around the country, such as New York, Washington, and Tennessee, are researching conversion technologies as a viable and environmentally preferable alternative to incineration and landfilling. However, in California, current technically inaccurate

The Honorable Loni Hancock
December 21, 2005
Page 4

statutes discourage the research and development of these much-needed alternatives to traditional waste disposal. Without any expenditure of public funds, AB 1090 would create a level playing field for conversion technologies, allowing them to compete in the private sector with other solid waste management options based on their economic viability as well as their relative environmental impacts and benefits.

Once again, we would like to thank you for holding this hearing in the City of Los Angeles, giving local jurisdictions, members of the public, and other stakeholders an additional opportunity to be a part of the legislative process. Because we are confident in the capabilities of conversion technologies and wish to promote their environmental benefits, the Task Force is implementing a plan to facilitate the development of a demonstration conversion technology facility in Southern California, and will be widely publicizing the results of these efforts as they progress. We urge you to move AB 1090 out of the Assembly Natural Resources Committee, so that California can realize the benefits of these technologies. If we view waste as a resource and are open to the myriad of possibilities that can arise from the use of advanced technologies, we can make significant gains in improving the quality of life and the environment in California.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (626) 569-2100 or your staff may 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
Councilmember, City of Rosemead

VJ/CS:ro

P:\epub\Secfinal\Task Force\Letters\AB1090_Hearing Conversion Technologies.doc

cc: Governor's Office of Legislative Affairs
Governor's Los Angeles Field Office
Special Assistant to the Governor for Energy and Environmental Technologies
(Terry Tamminen)
Assembly Member Barbara Matthews
Each Member of the Assembly Natural Resources Committee
Each Member of the Assembly Agriculture Committee
Secretary of the California Environmental Protection Agency (Alan C. Lloyd)
Secretary of California Department of Food and Agriculture (A.G. Kawamura)

Each Member of the California Integrated Waste Management Board
Each Member of the Los Angeles County Legislative Delegation
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
Southern California Association of Governments
San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments
South Bay Cities Council of Governments
Each Member of the Los Angeles County Integrated Waste Management Task Force
Each Member of the Alternative Technology Advisory Subcommittee of the
Los Angeles County Integrated Waste Management Task Force
Each Member of the City of Los Angeles' Ad Hoc RENEW LA Committee
University of California, Riverside
University of California, Davis
California State Pipe Trades Council
California State Association of Electrical Workers
Western States Council of Sheet Metal Workers
California Rice Commission (Paul Buttner)
California Refuse Removal Council
Assistant Director for Space and Aeronautics (Robie Samanta Roy)