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July 10, 2014

The Honorable Kevin De Leon, Chair  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
State Capitol, Room 4203  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Senator De Leon:

**OPPOSE UNLESS AMENDED ASSEMBLY BILL 1826 (AMENDED JULY 1, 2014)  
SOLID WASTE: ORGANIC WASTE**

The Los Angeles County Solid Waste Management Committee/Integrated Waste Management Task Force (Task Force) supports the state goal of increasing waste diversion to 75% or higher as established under AB 341 (2011, Chesbro). The Task Force also agrees that diverting organic waste from landfills will be necessary to accomplish this goal. However, in order for local governments to accomplish the State mandated goal, they need to be provided with tools for successful implementation of an organic waste recycling program. For this reason the Task Force currently **opposes** Assembly Bill 1826 (July 1, 2014 version) **unless amended** to address the following concerns. In the meantime, we will continue to work with Assembly Member Chesbro and/or his staff as well as your Committee Consultant to address these issues with the goal of reaching a resolution prior to the hearing of the subject bill by your Committee.

- Provide incentives for increased organic waste processes infrastructure and remove barriers to the use of new technologies for processing organic wastes.
- Expand criteria for delaying implementation of the “organic waste recycling program” by a jurisdiction.
- Define the terms “organic waste recycling”, and “reasonable vicinity” unless they will be defined by the Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle) through the rulemaking process.
- Remove program requirements which seem excessive by placing more of the decision making power over the organic waste recycling program in the hands of the local jurisdictions.

**Provide incentives and Remove Barriers to infrastructure and additional processing options**

The enactment of AB 1826 would necessitate the development of new composting and/or anaerobic digestion (AD) facilities. Urbanized areas such as Southern California do not have sufficient composting facilities due to the South Coast Air Basin's air quality standards. Therefore, the organic waste must be shipped out of the region, which is both very costly and not environmentally friendly, or processed at AD facilities which under current State statute seem to be the most viable option but presently none exist in Los Angeles County (with exception of publically owned sewage treatment facilities). Currently, the 89 jurisdictions in Los Angeles County generate over 5 million tons of organics (including green materials) per year, and our preliminary estimates indicate that County jurisdictions would need over 36 AD facilities with a processing capability of 250 tons-per-day each. A similarly sized facility in San Jose cost approximately \$40 million; therefore, the total cost to build this infrastructure in Los Angeles County could be as high as \$2 billion. This is essentially a new industry for Los Angeles County and as previously indicated there are currently no AD facilities in the County that are open to the public.

We believe state-administered grant, tax incentive, and loan programs are critical to helping this industry get off the ground and become successful. Significant funding will be required to build the necessary processing infrastructure for organic waste recycling, which should not be limited to one or two processes.

Many thermal, chemical, biological, and mechanical conversion technologies could be utilized to process organic material into a wide spectrum of resources that can be used to produce electricity and fuels in an environmentally friendly and protective manner. However, these technologies are stifled by antiquated legislative and regulatory barriers. These technologies can diversify our approach to organic waste management and help jurisdictions comply with the State's direction to divert these materials from landfill disposal.

We encourage the State to take a technology neutral position or, at a minimum, not prohibit technologies that can provide equal or greater greenhouse gas reductions than anaerobic digestion and composting. Although anaerobic digestion is at present the most widely used technology in California to convert biodegradable organic waste to energy, biomass gasification and other conversion technologies can manage a broader array of organic waste and have much lower residuals that may still need to be disposed of while providing comparable or greater greenhouse gas reductions, which must be the primary emphasis of the State's effort to divert organics from landfills through source separated collection.

The Task Force applauds the proposed legislation's attempts to remove or reduce barriers to the development of needed infrastructures as formulated in Subdivisions

42649.86 (a) and (b). However, we would additionally recommend that the proposed legislation be expanded to include the following, which, in most part, is consistent with the recommendations of the AB 32 (2006) Climate Change Scoping Plan Update.

*“The State Air Resources Board and the Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery shall identify financing/funding/incentive mechanisms for in-State infrastructure development to support the Waste Management Sector’s goals of the 2014 Climate Change Scoping Plan Update prepared pursuant to the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006. Mechanisms to be considered shall include the Cap-and-Trade Investment Plan; loan, grant and payment programs; Low Carbon Fuel Standard pathways; the Public Utilities Commission proceedings (e.g. biogas from anaerobic digestion and Renewable Market Adjusting Tariff); and offset protocols for recycling, composting, anaerobic digestion, biomass, as well as the Department’s identified thermal, chemical, biological and mechanical processes.”*

**Expand criteria for delaying implementation of the “organic waste recycling program” by a jurisdiction**

The proposed legislation [Sections 42649.82(h)(6)and (9)] provides for CalRecycle to consider the availability of facilities and markets for collected organic waste recyclables as factors to determine whether the jurisdiction has made a good faith effort to implement its organic waste recycling program. However, the Task Force strongly believes that jurisdictions need additional flexibility in delaying the implementation of their commercial organic waste recycling program if through no fault of their own, processing infrastructure and markets are unavailable to handle the influx of organics.

Unlike recyclable materials that can be stored in warehouses and/or shipped to foreign markets, storage of organic waste recyclables (including food waste) beyond one or two days becomes a significant hazard to public health and safety as well as the environment. Therefore, the proposed bill needs to be expanded to clearly address this issue and provide much needed flexibility to local governments as recommended below:

Expand Subdivision 42649.82(h) to include a new paragraph stating *“The department shall find a jurisdiction in compliance as required by subdivision (g) if through no fault of its own, processing infrastructure and/or markets are unavailable to handle the influx of organic wastes.”*

**Provide definition of “organic waste recycling”**

The Task Force is concerned that AB 1826 does not define the terms “organic waste recycling.” This key term should be defined to give a clear direction on available options in order to allow local governments to establish collection systems and infrastructure. We recommend the following definition for the term “organic waste recycling.”

*“Organic waste recycling” means programs that when implemented would reduce or eliminate the amount of organic solid waste as defined in this chapter from landfill disposal.”*

### **Remove excessive program requirements**

The proposed Subdivision 42649.82(d), among other things, requires programs to identify vacant parcels, existing vacant or expandable facilities, and zoning and permitting requirements, and the removal of barriers to siting and/or expanding an existing “organic waste recycling facility.” These requirements are one step away from forcing local jurisdictions to render their land use decision making authority to CalRecycle. Planning and land use decisions are the purview of local jurisdictions and they are the only ones familiar enough with their communities to make decisions about what types of facilities should be sited in their communities. A local program developed for a State requirement should only be required to educate and engage in outreach activities to businesses. For the same reason, the requirements stated under Subdivision 42649.82(h), Paragraph (10) need to be deleted too.

Additionally, Subparagraph (l) (A) of the proposed Subdivision requires programs to identify all “existing organic waste recycling facilities within a ‘reasonable vicinity’ and the capacities available for materials to be accepted at each facility.” The term “reasonable vicinity” needs to be defined unless it will be defined by CalRecycle through the rulemaking process.” Also, the requirements of this Subparagraph are unnecessary and not available to those jurisdictions where solid waste collection and recycling services are provided by a private waste management company/waste hauler via a contract or franchise agreement. As such, in these situations, the requirements need to be made applicable to the waste management company that is providing the service to the jurisdiction under contract or franchise agreement.

As provided by AB 939 (1989) and Chapter 3.67 of the Los Angeles County Code, the Task Force is responsible for coordinating the development of major solid waste planning documents for the County of Los Angeles and the 88 cities in Los Angeles County, with a combined population of over ten million. Consistent with these responsibilities and to ensure a coordinated, 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, County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors, City of Los Angeles, the waste management industry, environmental groups, the public, and a number of other governmental agencies.

The Task Force is supportive of organic waste recycling programs and the diversion of organics from landfill disposal. Unfortunately, because of the foregoing, we are

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currently **opposed** to AB 1826 (July 1, 2014, version) **unless amended** to address the issues described above.

Should you or your staff have any questions regarding the subject matter, please contact Mr. Mike Mohajer of the Task Force at [MikeMohajer@yahoo.com](mailto:MikeMohajer@yahoo.com) or at (909) 592-1147.

Sincerely,



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

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cc: Assembly Members Chesbro, Gordon, Skinner, Ting, and Williams  
Each Member of the Senate Appropriations Committee and the Committee Consultant  
California State Association of Counties  
League of California Cities  
Each Member of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors  
San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments  
South Bay Cities Council of Governments  
San Fernando Valley Council of Governments  
Gateway Cities Council of Governments  
Westside Cities Council of Governments  
Each City Mayor and City Manager in the County of Los Angeles  
Each City Recycling Coordinator in Los Angeles County  
Each Member of the Los Angeles County Integrated Waste Management Task Force