



LOS ANGELES COUNTY
SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE/
INTEGRATED WASTE MANAGEMENT TASK FORCE
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GAIL FARBER, CHAIR
MARGARET CLARK, VICE-CHAIR

October 22, 2012

Ms. Carol Mortensen, Director
Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery
1001 I Street
Sacramento, CA 95812-4025

Dear Ms. Mortensen:

TASK FORCE ADOPTS KEY DEFINITIONS AND NEW SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT PARADIGM

On September 20, 2012, the Los Angeles County Solid Waste Management Committee/Integrated Waste Management Task Force (Task Force) adopted definitions for the terms “recovery” and “conversion technologies” as well as the “New Waste Management Paradigm” (enclosed). For years, a variety of terms and solid waste management hierarchies have been used by state agencies and local governments. We are sharing these definitions and revised paradigm with our state and local government partners, encouraging them to adopt these terms in an effort to unify terminology, so that a productive conversation can take place on issues relating to energy and product recovery from waste.

Broadly based on adopted definitions used by the U.S. EPA and European Union, the Task Force’s definition of “recovery” is intended to capture the many management opportunities that could potentially decrease the amount of waste going to landfills.

The term “conversion technologies” was coined by the County of Los Angeles and the Task Force over a decade ago and has been used in local government and industry circles ever since to describe *non-combustion* technologies that can convert residual solid waste to useful products and fuels.

Similar to the solid waste management hierarchy shared by CalRecycle at their September 19, 2012, "Discussion of Concepts for Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) Performance Standards" workshop, the "New Waste Management Paradigm" promotes the concept that the highest quantity of materials should be eliminated from the waste stream through source reduction and extended producer responsibility. Following efforts to reuse and recycle components of the waste stream, opportunities to convert the remaining materials into energy, biofuels, and compost should be preferred over landfill disposal. Rather than landfills serving as the "base" of the waste management hierarchy pyramid, they are seen as the option of last resort for those materials that simply cannot be recovered for some other beneficial purpose. This new paradigm should serve as a model for sustainability and environmental stewardship as well as the plan currently under preparation by CalRecycle pursuant to AB 341 (2011) for achieving the state diversion goal of 75% by 2020.

Pursuant to Chapter 3.67 of the Los Angeles County Code and the California Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989 (Assembly Bill 939 [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 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, waste management industry, environmental groups, the public, and a number of other governmental agencies.

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Should you or a member of your staff have any question regarding this letter, please contact Mr. Mike Mohajer of the Task Force at MikeMohajer@yahoo.com or (909) 592-1147.

Sincerely,



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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Enclosures

cc: Honorable Governor Jerry Brown
Cliff Rechtschaffen, Sr. Advisor to the Governor
Gareth Elliott, the Governor Legislative Affair Secretary
Matt Rodriquez, Cal-EPA Secretary
Mary Nichols, Chair, California Air Resources Board
Carla Peterman, Commissioner, California Energy Commission
CalRecycle (Mark Leary, Scott Smithline)
California State Association of Counties
League of California Cities
League of California Cities, Los Angeles Division
Each Member of the County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors
Rita Robinson, Los Angeles County Chief Executive Office
Each City Mayor in the County of Los Angeles
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 Manager in the County of Los Angeles
Each City Recycling Coordinator in the County of Los Angeles
Each Member of the Los Angeles County Integrated Waste Management Task Force
Each Member of the Alternative Technology Advisory Subcommittee

New Waste Management Paradigm and Key Definitions

Adopted by the Los Angeles County Integrated Waste Management Task Force on September 20, 2012



1. Definition of “Conversion Technologies”

The term “conversion technologies” refers to a wide array of technologies capable of converting post-recycled or residual solid waste into useful products, green fuels, and renewable energy through non-combustion thermal, chemical, or biological processes. Conversion technologies may include mechanical processes when combined with a non-combustion thermal, chemical, or biological conversion process.

2. Definition of “Recovery”

Recovery is defined as any waste management operation that diverts a material from the waste stream and which results in a product with a potential economic or ecological benefit. Recovery mainly refers to the following operations 1) re-use, 2) material recovery such as recycling 3) biological recovery such as composting, and 4) energy recovery such as fuel production.