

## Pilot project will turn organic waste into clean energy source

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San Mateo County is set to launch a new landfill diversion pilot project that will convert organic materials into a clean energy source using an Organics Extrusion Press (OREX).

Today, the County's Board of Supervisors approved funding for the OPEX, which is expected to begin operating in December this year.

From its home at the Shoreway Environmental Center in San Carlos, OREX is expected to extract between 50 and 75 tons of organic material per day from waste that would otherwise head to landfills and composting facilities. That material will then be anaerobically digested into a carbon-negative renewable natural gas that will be used by the East Bay Municipal Utility District. As importantly, it will reduce the amount of waste being sent to landfills, the County said. If the so-called Organics-to-Energy pilot succeeds, it would ideally be expanded, the County says.



The Shoreway Environmental Center receives over 221,000 tons of garbage annually, of which 30 percent is made up of organic material, according to Joe La Mariana, executive director of RethinkWaste, a solid waste joint powers authority that includes 11 cities, the County and the West Bay Sanitary District.

"This pilot project will help move these materials out of the landfill and create a clean energy source for our operations," La Mariana said in a statement.

The \$5 million project will be funded by \$3 million in CalRecycle grants, \$1.25 million from RethinkWaste, and \$1 million from the County using funds designated for waste reduction and recycling programs.

"This type of innovation benefits our communities today with cleaner air and over the long term by reducing our County's reliance on landfills," said Supervisor Carole Groom. "Using our resources wisely begins with reducing and composting food waste at home and is complimented by creative technologies like this."