

California Department of Resources Recycling (CalRecycle) Attends Task Force Meeting

On July 16, 2020, CalRecycle's new Deputy Director Matt Hennigan and Cara Morgan, Environmental Program Manager II of Materials Management and Local Assistance attended the Task Force meeting, taking the opportunity to have an open discussion regarding the impacts of COVID-19, CalRecycle's June 16, 2020 Letter to Jurisdictions regarding Tracking Disposed Recyclables due to COVID-19, and disposal reporting. The Task Force shared several concerns, including the need for more clarification on the process for disposal modifications.

During the meeting, Mr. Gideon Kracov raised the California Air Resources Board (CARB)'s new rules mandating electrification of medium- and heavy-duty fleets. He requested that CalRecycle work with CARB to develop an understanding of the important role of renewable natural gas (RNG) in the waste sector. Revenues from selling RNG produced from organic waste is a key factor in the financing of anaerobic digestion facilities. CalRecycle responded they have discussed the issue with CARB and that electrification is planned to occur in phases.

Additional concerns were discussed as well, including:

- CalRecycle's guidance being released three months after the Public Health Orders
- CalRecycle providing inconsistent classification of the non-diverted recyclable waste
- Lack of instructions provided by CalRecycle to landfill operators on how to report the recyclable materials that were being brought to the landfills due to the COVID-19 impacts.

It was also noted that if the non-diverted recyclable waste was already entered as general municipal solid waste, jurisdictions may see significant increases in their total disposed waste for their 2020 reporting, but do not know how to estimate non-diverted recyclable materials that were disposed. CalRecycle indicated that they understand the challenges local jurisdictions are currently facing regarding Senate Bill 1383 (SB 1383) compliance and COVID-19. CalRecycle indicated they intend to assist jurisdictions with compliance, and they are not intent on issuing penalties.

On August 6, 2020, the Task Force sent a letter asking CalRecycle to consider waste-to-energy (WTE) and non-combustion thermal conversion technologies (CTs) that process organic waste as reductions in landfill disposal consistent with SB 1383. The letter indicated that diverting organic waste from landfills using processes and technologies that maximize near-term reductions in methane emissions need to be incorporated as part of a comprehensive climate change strategy to achieve California's climate change objectives. As of this printing, the Task Force is still awaiting a response from CalRecycle to this letter.



Figure 1 Anaerobic Digestion Facility