

Alternative Technology Advisory Subcommittee
Los Angeles County Solid Waste Management Committee/
Integrated Waste Management Task Force

May 16, 2024

Los Angeles County Public Works
900 South Fremont Avenue
Alhambra, CA 91803

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

William Chen, Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts
Kate Downey, rep by Michael Stewart, Republic Services
Wayde Hunter, North Valley Coalition of Concerned Citizens, Inc.
Ron Kent, rep by Ethan Simonoff, Southern California Gas
Ben Lucha, Antelope Valley Resident
Dee Hanson-Lugo, Los Angeles County Department of Public Health
Fahim Rahimi, Los Angeles County Public Works
James Roska, rep by Ronaldo Milo, City of Los Angeles Bureau of Sanitation
Heather Williams, California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery
(CalRecycle)

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS NOT PRESENT

Steve Cassulo, Waste Connections
Kay Martin, Bioenergy Producers Association
Mike Mohajer, Los Angeles County Integrated Waste Management Task Force
Kevin Mattson, Waste Management
Eugene Tseng, UCLA Solid Waste Program

OTHERS PRESENT:

Cesar Leon, Tetra Tech
Jim Miller, Tetra Tech
Josephine Chen, Los Angeles County Public Works
Darren Kwan, Los Angeles County Public Works
Omar Carrillo Maldonado, Los Angeles County Public Works
Vanessa Olivas, Los Angeles County Public Works
Carol Saucillo, Los Angeles County Public Works
Airon Tee, Los Angeles County Public Works
Kawsar Vazifdar, Los Angeles County Public Works
Kim Yapp, Los Angeles County Public Works

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Fahim Rahimi called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m.

II. APPROVAL OF APRIL 18, 2024, SUBCOMMITTEE MINUTES

Mr. Ron Milo made a motion to approve the April 18, 2024, minutes and Mr. William Chen seconded. Motion passed with one abstention.

III. UPDATE ON CONVERSION TECHNOLOGY PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Cesar Leon from Tetra Tech stated that Tetra Tech:

- Submitted to Environmental Programs Division (EPD) for review a Countywide Siting Evaluation for the development of anaerobic digestion (AD) and/or thermal conversion technology (CT) facilities within the unincorporated County areas and 88 jurisdictions in the County.
- Submitted a workplan to perform a detailed feasibility evaluation of three closed landfill sites that will investigate land availability and land use compatibility.
- Submitted to EPD for review a Draft Long-Term Solid Waste Disposal Needs Study for Antelope Valley in compliance with Lancaster Landfill Conditional Use Permit, Condition 92, which includes the performance of a high-level review of economic, environmental, and technical considerations for CT facility options.

IV. UPDATE ON CONVERSION TECHNOLOGY POLICY AND LEGISLATION

Ms. Kawsar Vazifdar provided the following update:

- The U.S. Department of Energy has announced up to \$17.5 million in grant funds through the "Waste Analysis and Strategies for Transportation End-Uses" opportunity. These funds follow a phased approach, focusing on two topic areas. The first topic area is feasibility studies, and the second topic area is design work and experimental validation. An additional \$10 million in federal funds will be accessible for pilot-scale system construction and operation. Concept papers are due by 5 p.m. ET on June 19, 2024, and the full application deadline is on August 14, 2024, by 5 p.m. ET.
- CalRecycle did not have any Senate Bill (SB) 1383 chats this month.
- The most recent CalRecycle meeting was on April 16, 2024, and a summary was provided during the previous ATAS meeting on April 18, 2024. The next monthly CalRecycle meeting will be held on May 21, 2024.

V. UPDATE ON CONVERSION TECHNOLOGY EVENTS/MEETINGS/OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

Mr. Omar Carrillo Maldonado provided an update on upcoming CT events and conferences that may also be found in the [Conversion Technology Newsletter](#) and Subcommittee minutes:

- Biogas Americas 2024: May 13 - 16, 2024, Savannah, GA
- SWANA Western Regional Symposium 2024: May 20 - 23, 2024, Palm Springs, CA
- SB 1383 Workshop & Demo Day: June 6, 2024, Irvine, CA
- California Hydrogen Leadership Summit: June 16 - 17, 2024, Sacramento, CA
- Air and Waste Management Association's 117th Annual Conference and Exhibition: June 24 - 27, 2024, Calgary, Alberta, CA
- The 15th Waste Conversion Technology Conference and Trade Show: August 12 – 14, 2024, San Diego, CA
- California Resource Recovery Association Conference and Trade Show: August 18 - 21, Anaheim CA

VI. PRESENTATION BY TETRA TECH

Mr. Jim Miller provided a [presentation](#) on AD of materials from the collected waste stream.

Mr. Wayde Hunter inquired about the San Jose Facility and if the windrows are specific to that location. Mr. Miller confirmed they are. He said that composting was initially done at the side, however due to odor issues they instead aerate their material to reduce the ammonia and ship it to Salinas for processing. Mr. Hunter asked how other facilities are handling feedstock. Mr. Miller replied that other facilities deal with the feedstock inside the facility. Mr. Hunter noted that it would be detrimental to facilities to process material that is not covered and put into tanks. Mr. Miller stated that the San Jose Facility is in a remote location, next to a wastewater treatment plant and landfill. Mr. Hunter asked if all the material is being fully digested or if the excess is being sent to a landfill. Mr. Miller replied that all facilities have a method of removing contaminants from the feedstock before they go into the processor. He added that leftover waste besides recyclables and green waste will be sent to landfills.

Mr. Milo asked if nonbiodegradable plastic is accepted as feedstock for AD. Mr. Miller replied that it is financially unfeasible to run the processor for all materials due to some material taking longer to process into compost. Mr. Milo asked if non-compostable paper has different layers. Mr. Miller confirmed they do.

Mr. Chen asked for comparison between AD and composting when it comes to organic loading, and if there needs to be a specific ratio between green organic waste for composting. Mr. Miller replied that there is a limitation on how much food waste to green waste can be composted based on the capabilities of the gas upgrade technology. Mr. Miller added that another limitation is that the material used for processing needs to be a certain consistency to work. Mr. Chen asked if compost facilities have another layer of defense to remove contaminants. Mr. Miller suggested that there is and noted that the San Jose Facility directly processes the material, which usually includes about 40 percent of contaminants. The contaminants are dealt with afterwards. Mr. Miller noted the argument of either dealing with the contaminants before they enter the composter or after.

Ms. Dee Hansen-Lugo asked if the San Jose Facility has both an AD and composter on-site. Mr. Miller replied that the materials recovery facility (MRF) is located at Newby Island and is operated by Republic Services. Ms. Hansen-Lugo stated that a lot of contamination may come from the MRF. Mr. Miller noted that the digester is only one component of the system, and that organic material is extracted from two streams of wet and dry materials. Ms. Hansen-Lugo asked if it is a high diversion MRF. Mr. Miller replied that it is not.

Mr. Ethan Simonoff asked about existing barriers in deploying new facilities with ADs. Mr. Miller replied that it is technically possible to process all organic matter in the state but is limited due to the expenses of building the facilities. Mr. Simonoff asked how distributed solutions can fit into AD systems. Mr. Miller stated that there are systems that can be placed in the back of restaurants and other small buildings.

Mr. Rahimi asked if the costs are upfront and if they include operational and maintenance costs. Mr. Miller replied yes to both. Mr. Rahimi asked if there are technological advancements that can bring the cost down. Mr. Miller replied that by increasing the scale of the facility it can decrease the unit cost.

Mr. Hunter noted that the city may have a contract to dump municipal solid waste (MSW) into a landfill for \$35 to \$40 dollars a ton, as it costs at least \$100 a ton for the public to dump MSW into landfills. Mr. Miller acknowledged that it would be best to close the gap between the difference in payment.

Mr. Simonoff asked how fuel and energy should be priced to bridge the cost disparity in dumping MSW. Mr. Miller replied that there are tariffs in place to support generating renewable natural gas. Mr. Chen noted that transportation costs are the primary reason for the price disparity, thus making it more efficient to keep transportation local.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Leon noted that other cities are working on their own AD projects, and that it would be interesting to hear from them.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 10:55 a.m. The next ATAS meeting is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, June 20, 2024.