



GAIL FARBER
CHAIR

LOS ANGELES COUNTY
SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE/
INTEGRATED WASTE MANAGEMENT TASK FORCE
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www.lacountyiswmtf.org

September 11, 2009

Mr. Gary Gero, President
Climate Action Reserve
523 West Sixth Street, Suite 428
Los Angeles, CA 90014

Dear Mr. Gero:

**COMMENTS REGARDING THE CLIMATE ACTION RESERVE ORGANIC WASTE
DIGESTION PROJECT PROTOCOL**

On behalf of the Los Angeles County Integrated Waste Management Task Force (Task Force), I wish to thank the Climate Action Reserve (Reserve) for its efforts to develop the August 5, 2009 Draft Organic Waste Digestion Project Protocol (Draft Protocol) and would like to provide comments regarding two key issues.

Pursuant to Chapter 3.67 of the Los Angeles County Code and the California Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989 (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 its 88 cities in Los Angeles County with a combined population in excess of 10 million. Consistent with these responsibilities, and to ensure a coordinated and 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, the County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors, the City of Los Angeles, the waste management industry, environmental groups, the public, and a number of other governmental agencies.

The Task Force is a consistent supporter of conversion technologies, such as anaerobic digestion, as a way to divert post-recycled residual waste from landfills and create renewable energy, biofuels, and other useful products. We recognize that for widespread development of these types of technologies in California there has to be a regulatory pathway coupled with economic incentives. The Reserve established this Draft Protocol as a mechanism to include anaerobic digestion projects in the Reserve's national carbon offsets program. Inclusion in this program not only provides economic incentives to a project through buying and trading of carbon credits, but also due to the stringent guidelines of the program, legitimizes the environmental benefits of a project.

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However, we are concerned that in its current form the Draft Protocol limits the eligible feedstocks processed by an eligible project to only MSW food waste and/or agro-industrial wastewater. Other forms of organic materials may be co-digested along with one of the eligible feedstocks, but no greenhouse gas reductions can be claimed under this Draft Protocol from those materials. This guideline may negatively incentivize projects to exclusively manage food waste and sewage sludge and not consider processing other components of the organic wastestream, which is estimated by the California Integrated Waste Management Board to be over 73 percent of the State's municipal solid waste stream (including food waste, yard trimmings, wood waste, and mixed paper).

One of the benefits of processing organic waste in an anaerobic digester is that the biogas produced through the process can be collected then 1) cleaned and injected directly into natural gas delivery pipelines, or 2) be used as a fuel for stationary power generating equipment. While both processes are economically and environmentally beneficial, neither is included in the Draft Protocol. Instead the Draft Protocol states that the biogas must be destroyed. At a time when both State and Federal governments are trying to reduce our dependence on foreign oil and increase the production renewable energy, this seems like a contradiction to many policy goals and a waste of resources. This could even become a disincentive for project developers to create renewable energy or biofuels. We understand all carbon credits must be "Real, Measurable, Verifiable, and Additional" however the importance of these protocols is to distinguish the benefits from the destruction of the methane gas that are above and beyond the carbon reductions from displacing fossil fuel, for example.

We appreciate your consideration of our comments and the considerable time and effort your staff has put into developing the Draft Protocol. Should you have any questions, please contact Mr. Mike Mohajer of the Task Force at (909) 592-1147.

Sincerely,

Margaret Clark

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

TM/CS:

cc: Climate Action Reserve (Syd Partridge, Derik Broekhoff, Tim Kidman, Nancy Kong, Heather Raven, Rachel Tornek)

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California State Association of Counties
League of California Cities
League of California Cities, Los Angeles County Division
Each Member of the County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors
Each City Mayor in the County of Los Angeles
South Bay Cities Council of Governments
San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments
Gateway Cities Counsel of Governments
Southern California Association of Governments
Each City Recycling Coordinator in Los Angeles County
Each Member of the Los Angeles County Integrated Waste Management Task Force
Each Member of the Task Force Alternative Technical Advisory Subcommittee