

California Bill Expands Definition of RNG

By Erin Voegele | October 08, 2020

California Gov. Gavin Newsom signed a bill on Sept. 30 that significantly expands the definition of renewable natural gas (RNG) to include energy that comes from additional forms of organic waste, including vegetation removed for wildfire mitigation.

The bill, AB 3163, was introduced in February. The California Assembly approved the bill by a vote of 52 to 11 in June. The state Senate passed the legislation in late August by a vote of 31 to seven. Newsom signed the bill on Sept. 30.

With the expanded definition of RNG in the bill, pipeline-qualify RNG can be made from methane produced through the anaerobic decomposition of organic material, including codigestion. The methane can also be produced from the non-combustion thermal conversion of agricultural crop residues; bark, lawn, yard, and garden clippings; leaves, silvicultural residue, and tree and brush prunings; wood, wood chips, and wood waste; nonrecyclable pulp or nonrecyclable paper materials; livestock waste; and municipal sewage sludge or biosolids.



The legislation is expected to increase the availability of RNG while also helping California manage wildfires by reducing debris and lower greenhouse gas emissions.

Southern California Gas Co. (SoCalGas) has spoken out in support of the bill, noting it will allow the state to convert organic waste into an affordable and renewable energy solution. "Renewable natural gas can help reverse planet warming emissions," SoCalGas said in a statement.

"In fact, a recent study by the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratories found that converting organic waste to clean fuels like renewable natural gas (RNG) holds the greatest potential for negative emissions at the lowest cost.

"In the last five years alone, RNG use as a transportation fuel has increased almost 600 percent, helping displace diesel in trucks, consistent with Governor Newsom's goal. And RNG could displace even more.

"As supplies grow, and with support from state regulators, RNG could be delivered as an affordable clean energy option for homes and businesses here as well," the company continued.

"SoCalGas applauds state lawmakers for pursuing policies like AB 3163 that deliver on the state's environmental goals and get us one step closer to achieving an integrated, 21st Century energy system that is clean, reliable, resilient and affordable."

Additional information on the bill is available on the California Legislature [website](#).