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CHAIRMAN

LOS ANGELES COUNTY
SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE/
INTEGRATED WASTE MANAGEMENT TASK FORCE
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March 31, 2005

Mr. Joe Desmond
Deputy Secretary of Energy
California State Resources Agency
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Deputy Secretary Desmond:

**CONVERSION TECHNOLOGIES:
SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT AND RENEWABLE ENERGY IMPLICATIONS**

On March 15, 2005 the California Integrated Waste Management Board adopted a resolution forwarding a comprehensive report to the legislature regarding conversion technologies (see enclosed Resolution). The term conversion technology refers to an array of state of the art technologies capable of converting residual solid waste (material remaining after recyclables have been extracted) into useful products including renewable and environmentally benign fuels, chemicals, and other sources of clean energy, such as electricity. The Waste Board found that conversion technologies "can result in substantial environmental benefits for California," including reduction in landfill disposal, production of renewable energy, reduced dependence on fossil fuels, and reduction of greenhouse gases, all while complementing California's recycling infrastructure and complying with strict environmental safeguards. The advent of these technologies is a reflection of the scientific and technological advances that have the potential to significantly improve the quality of life of our citizens by lessening our dependence on landfilling, incineration, and imported fossil fuels.

The Los Angeles County Integrated Waste Management Task Force has been a consistent advocate for evaluating and implementing alternatives to landfilling and incineration for many years. 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. Consistent with these responsibilities, and to ensure a coordinated and cost-effective solid waste management system, the Task Force addresses issues impacting the solid waste management system throughout the County. 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 established the Alternative Technology Advisory Subcommittee as an outgrowth of its commitment to conversion technologies and to bring together representatives from local government, the

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Waste Board, facility operators, and consultants and experts in the field of alternative resource management technologies to study and promote these technologies.

The Task Force unanimously voted to communicate to you our desire to lay the groundwork for an integrated appraisal of these technologies by the State as these technologies begin to enter the American mainstream. Although conversion technologies have been in common use in Europe and Japan for many years, their use for managing biomass and municipal solid waste in California has been limited. The passage of AB 2770 in 2002 laid the groundwork for the Waste Board to commission an independent study of these technologies and scientifically evaluate their life cycle environmental impacts and benefits in relation to other solid waste management options. The studies not only compared conversion technologies to disposal options such as landfilling and incineration, but also to recycling and composting, evaluating their potential impacts on the recycling industry. The results of those studies speak for themselves regarding the tremendous positive potential these technologies offer and are well-summarized in the Waste Board-adopted resolution.

Now that momentum is building to make better use of these emerging technologies to address the growing solid waste management needs of California, we should at the same time evaluate their potential to address California's need for locally produced, clean and renewable energy, fuels, and additive replacements for MTBE such as ethanol. Although the Waste Board-commissioned studies touched on these issues and identified the potential for conversion technologies to produce clean, renewable energy and fuel, we are now at a critical juncture to ensure conversion technologies are allowed to develop to meet those needs. This will require a coordinated approach that evaluates conversion technologies from more than just a solid waste management perspective.

We understand that Governor Schwarzenegger has developed a ten-point plan for the State to manage our energy resources in the future, and has set even higher renewable energy goals for the State. We also understand that the Governor is developing a Statewide Biomass Task Force in order to assure these resources are better utilized. The development of conversion technologies can assist in meeting these goals and perfectly complements the Governor's energy and biomass utilization goals. Therefore, we look forward to working with you in the future on this important issue. To this end, I would like to extend our Alternative Technology Advisory Subcommittee as a resource to you, representing a diverse panel of experts in the field of conversion technology that are actively working to develop a demonstration facility in Southern California in order to showcase the potential of these technologies.

We are greatly interested in your plans and opinions regarding the future of conversion technology. We are also interested in the current initiatives by the Governor and your agency to promote conversion as an alternative source of renewable energy and an intrinsic component of waste management for California. Conversion technology has the potential to utilize biomass, and convert it to usable products, such as fuel and energy, which would otherwise be disposed in landfills.

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We will continue to monitor the State's efforts on this issue and look forward to your response. Should you have any questions regarding these comments or the Task Force's efforts, please contact Mr. Mike Mohajer of the Task Force at (909) 592-1147.

Sincerely,



Michael Miller, Vice-Chair
Los Angeles County Solid Waste Management Committee/
Integrated Waste Management Task Force, and
Councilmember, City of West Covina

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cc: Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger
Cabinet Secretary (Terry Tamminen)
Secretary of California Environmental Protection Agency (Alan C. Lloyd)
Secretary of California Department of Food and Agriculture (A.G. Kawamura)
Chair of California Energy Commission (William J. Keese)
Secretary of Resources (Mike Chrisman)
Each Member of the California Integrated Waste Management Board
Mr. Mark Leary, Executive Director, California Integrated Waste Management Board
Senate President Pro-Tem
Speaker of the Assembly
Each Member of Assembly Natural Resources Committee
Each Member of Assembly Agriculture Committee
Senate Environmental Quality Committee
Each Member of the County of Los Angeles Legislative Delegation
Each Member of the County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors
Each City Mayor in the County of Los Angeles
California State Association of Counties
League of California Cities
League of California Cities, Los Angeles County Division
San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments
South Bay Cities Council of Governments
Solid Waste Association of North America
Each Member of the Los Angeles County Integrated Waste Management Task Force
Each Member of the Alternative Technology Advisory Subcommittee