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LOS ANGELES COUNTY
SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE/
INTEGRATED WASTE MANAGEMENT TASK FORCE
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June 9, 2014

The Honorable Luis Alejo
1020 N Street, Room 171
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Assembly Member Alejo:

**SENATE BILL 498 (AMENDED JANUARY 27, 2014)
SOLID WASTE: BIOMASS CONVERSION – SUPPORT AND AMEND**

Senate Bill 498 (SB 498) would revise the definition of biomass conversion to include non-combustion thermal technologies. The Los Angeles County Solid Waste Management Committee/Integrated Waste Management Task Force (Task Force) **supports** the bill in its current form; however, we strongly urge you to amend the bill to its previous form as of January 7, 2014.

Pursuant to Chapter 3.67 of the Los Angeles County Code and the California Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989 (Assembly Bill 939 [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 the 88 cities in Los Angeles County with a combined population in excess of ten million. Consistent with these responsibilities and to ensure a coordinated, 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, County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors, City of Los Angeles, waste management industry, environmental groups, the public, and a number of other governmental agencies.

Current state statute limits biomass conversion to the controlled combustion of biomass materials which includes wood, lawn and garden clippings, agricultural waste, leaves, tree pruning as well as non-recyclable paper. SB 498 is intended to provide jurisdictions increased flexibility to process the same biomass material, with more efficient and environmentally friendlier non-combustion processes. However, the January 27, 2014, amendments needlessly limit the processes to “thermal” technologies while excluding chemical and biological technologies which are just as efficient and safe for the environment. Excluding these technologies would impede market innovation as well as local jurisdictions’ flexibility to process biomass material. Given the momentum towards requiring jurisdictions to process organic waste in a manner other than

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landfilling, (Air Resources Board AB 32 Scoping Plan Update; AB 1594, Williams; AB 1826, Chesbro) this bill should allow for flexibility to process a nominal subset of organic waste. Without more options, these materials may need to be transported to facilities hundreds of miles away from the generation points, which is both economically and environmentally costly.

Last year, Senate Bill 804 which would have allowed biomass to be processed by these types of technologies, was sent to Governor Brown. It was vetoed due to concerns regarding late amendments to the bill. Nevertheless, in his veto message the Governor indicated support for developing “a sensible approach that would apply to all biomass facilities **irrespective of the technologies used**” (emphasis added). This is exactly what the January 7, 2014 version of SB 498 would have done and we urge you to amend it back to that version.

Therefore, as stated above the Task Force **supports** SB 498, and respectfully requests you to **amend it** back to its previous form as of January 7, 2014. If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Mike Mohajer of the Task Force at MikeMohajer@yahoo.com or (909) 592-1147.

Sincerely,



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

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cc: Governor Edmund G. Brown
Each Member of the Assembly Environmental Safety & Toxic Materials Committee
California State Association of Counties
League of California Cities
Each Member of the County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors
San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments
South Bay Cities Council of Governments
Gateway Cities Council of Governments
Westside Cities Council of Governments
Each City Mayor and City Manager in the County of Los Angeles
Each Member of the Los Angeles County Integrated Waste Management Task Force
Each Member of the Alternative Technology Advisory Subcommittee