



NEWS RELEASE



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TURNING WASTE TO RENEWABLE RESOURCES JOINT STATE AGENCY EFFORT FURTHERS STATE'S GREEN ENERGY AGENDA

A Central Valley Regional Water Board vote has moved the state a step closer to reducing greenhouse gases by millions of tons.

The Regional Water Board voted unanimously today to approve a final EIR certification for a program of dairy manure digester and co-digesters in the Central Valley. This is the culmination of an intense, eleven-month interagency effort. It will enable state agencies to achieve Governor Schwarzenegger's mandates to reduce permit processing times by at least 50% for projects in renewable energy. "This achievement will be recognized as a major contribution by the Water Board towards achieving the state's climate goals," observed Central Valley Regional Water Board Chair **Katherine Hart**.

At today's meeting, the Water Board adopted a general order for digester facilities located on dairies. The Board anticipates at least one or more general order to regulate the various types of manure and co-digestion facilities to protect water quality. The adoption of the general orders will enable the Water Board to reduce the time required to permit dairy digester projects by at least 75%.

Dairy manure digester and co-digester projects can provide benefits to the state by generating usable methane (a byproduct of cow manure) and by reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Dairy manure digesters capture methane gas that can then be used to generate electricity or used as a substitute for conventional natural gas. Methane is one of the greenhouse gases blamed for global warming. Co-digesters convert, in addition to manure, agricultural and food processing waste, green waste, and fats, oils and grease into energy.

State and local agencies that worked with the Central Valley Regional Water Board in developing the program EIR include: the State Water Resources Control Board; Air Resources Board; the Department of Food and Agriculture; the Energy Commission; the Public Utilities Commission; the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District; the California Environmental Protection Agency; and the Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery.

"We fully support the effort to make it easier to permit digesters," said Air Resources Board Deputy Executive Officer, Bob Fletcher. "This effort to streamline the process will help

California Environmental Protection Agency

accelerate the number of digesters in California and address climate change by reducing the amount of methane, a potent greenhouse gas that enters the atmosphere." The EIR indicates that the program would result in a net maximum reduction of 1.6 million metric tons per year of Carbon Dioxide or CO₂ equivalent emissions under the EIR's build-out scenario, which assumes 200 dairy digesters, would be constructed over the next 10 years.

"This is an example of how agencies can work together to align the permitting process to help California agriculture diversify into the renewable energy sector while protecting our environment" says California Secretary of Food and Agriculture, A.G. Kawamura.

"Development of dairy digesters represents a potential revenue opportunity for dairy farm families during these tough economic times while at the same time assisting the state in reaching its ambitious renewable energy goals."

Energy Commission Vice Chair James Boyd says that the "program EIR shows the benefits from California interagency efforts and how working together helps the state to meet the goals of Governor Schwarzenegger's Executive Order which calls for 20% of renewable energy from biomass resources, and a minimum of 20% of its biofuels developed within California by 2010, 40% by 2020, and upwards."

The program EIR assesses the environmental impacts associated with manure digester and co-digester facilities throughout the Central Valley. The program EIR will expedite the environmental permitting and regulation of digester and co-digester facilities within the Central Valley for many state and local agencies. Other state and local permitting agencies may use the Program EIR to satisfy CEQA requirements for other permits related to dairy manure digester and co-digester projects, thus streamlining the permitting process.