RURAL COUNTY REPRESENTATIVES OF CALIFORNIA

June 1, 2023

The Honorable Ben Allen
Chair, Senate Environmental Quality Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 3230
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Assembly Bill 573 (Garcia) – SUPPORT
As Amended, May 18, 2023

Dear Senator Allen:

On behalf of the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), we support Assembly Bill 573 (Garcia), regarding organic waste procurement. RCRC is an association of forty rural California counties and the RCRC Board of Directors is comprised of elected supervisors from each of those member counties.

Assembly Bill 573 would, until December 1, 2039, allow local governments to procure organic waste-derived products from out-of-state facilities to meet the state's SB 1383 organic waste procurement obligations.

Many local governments are and will continue experiencing challenges in procuring recovered organic waste products to meet the obligations established under CalRecycle's SB 1383 regulations. Local jurisdictions need flexibility to meet their procurement obligations using products produced at out-of-state facilities. For many jurisdictions, that need will continue long after the December 1, 2039 sunset date contained in AB 573.

Many of California's counties that border Oregon, Nevada, and Arizona have lower population densities and much longer travel distances to in-state organic waste recycling facilities. Building or using an in-state organics facility is simply not an option for many border counties. Most of these counties qualify as "rural" jurisdictions with fewer than 70,000 residents, many have median household incomes well-below the statewide average, and most already have close relationships with more populous areas just across the state border. Weather conditions can also pose significant barriers to accessing and using products from in-state facilities. These border jurisdictions are often geographically isolated from areas in California where these facilities are or will be located. Building their own organics facility will not be feasible in many of these counties because of the costs

involved, low demand for end products (as a result of smaller populations), and potential for legal challenges.

AB 573 presents a common-sense approach to meeting the state's organic waste recycling and procurement goals by allowing local jurisdictions to use materials from out-of-state facilities, since those are the facilities used by the jurisdictions for recycling in the first place. AB 573 will avoid vehicle miles traveled and emissions from large trucks hauling organic waste-derived products over unnecessarily long distances.

For the above reasons, RCRC supports AB 573. If you should have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at jkennedy@rcrcnet.org.

Sincerely,

JOHN KENNEDY
Policy Advocate

cc: The Honorable Eduardo Garcia, Member, California State Assembly
Members of the Senate Environmental Quality Committee
Brynn Cook, Consultant, Senate Environmental Quality Committee
Scott Seekatz, Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus