



April 4, 2024

The Honorable Anna Caballero
Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee
State Capitol, Room 412
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Senate Bill 1046 (Laird) – SUPPORT
As Amended March 21, 2024**

Dear Senator Caballero:

On behalf of the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), California State Association of Counties (CSAC), the League of California Cities (Cal Cities), and Californians Against Waste (CAW) we are pleased to support Senate Bill 1046 (Laird). This measure seeks to expedite the construction of compost facilities without compromising the stringency of environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Senate Bill 1046 requires CalRecycle to develop a programmatic environmental impact report for small and medium-sized organic waste compost facilities. We support SB 1046 because we believe it will simplify the process for local permitting of small and medium-sized compost facilities and reduce delays related to environmental review and litigation.

SB 1383 requires the state to reduce landfill disposal of organic waste 75 percent below 2014 levels by 2025. CalRecycle's implementing regulations require local governments to divert organic waste and procure recycled materials derived from that organic waste stream. These requirements are estimated to cost \$20 billion to implement and will require the construction of 50-100 new organic waste recycling facilities. There are many permitting, siting and construction challenges for building new compost facilities, including delays and litigation risk arising from CEQA.

CEQA includes processes by which specific projects can “tier” off a more comprehensive programmatic environmental impact report (EIR). Once a programmatic EIR has been finalized (and any legal challenges resolved), subsequent projects can rely on that document and applicable mitigation measures. As such, subsequent projects do not need to “recreate the wheel” and can instead focus their CEQA analyses on project-specific impacts that were not contemplated and discussed in the programmatic EIR. This

The Honorable Anna Caballero
Senate Bill 1046
April 4, 2024
Page 2

approach can reduce costs, the time required for CEQA review, and litigation delays. CalRecycle can draw upon its experience preparing a similar programmatic EIR for anaerobic digestion facilities several years ago. That work, like a similar programmatic EIR prepared by CalFire for vegetation management work, has been very helpful for those seeking to construct anaerobic digestion facilities.

Given the importance the state has assigned to reducing methane emissions from organic waste management - and the significant investments that will be required to achieve those objectives - a small state investment in developing a programmatic EIR for composting facilities will repay itself many times over.

We are pleased to support SB 1046 because we believe it will help increase organic waste recycling, reduce pollution, help local governments comply with SB 1383, and create in-state manufacturing jobs.

For the above reasons, we respectfully request your “aye” vote when this bill is heard before your committee. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



JOHN KENNEDY
RCRC
Senior Policy Advocate
jkennedy@rcrcnet.org



MELISSA SPARKS-KRANZ
Cal Cities
Legislative Representative
msparkskranz@calcities.org



ADA WAELDER
CSAC
Legislative Advocate
awaelder@counties.org



ERICA PARKER
CAW
Policy Associate
erica@cawrecycles.org

cc: The Honorable John Laird, Member of the California State Senate
Members of the Senate Appropriations Committee
Ashley Ames, Consultant, Senate Appropriations Committee
Scott Seekatz, Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus