

Alternative Technology Advisory Subcommittee  
Los Angeles County Solid Waste Management Committee/  
Integrated Waste Management Task Force

**Minutes for April 15, 2021**

**WEB CONFERENCE**

Los Angeles County Public Works  
900 South Fremont Avenue  
Alhambra, CA 91803

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Michelle Dewey, California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery  
(CalRecycle)  
Carolyn Watson, rep by Dorcas Dee Daniel-Lugo, Los Angeles County Department of  
Public Health  
Mark McDannel, County Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County  
Wayde Hunter, North Valley Coalition of Concerned Citizens, Inc.  
Kevin Mattson, Waste Management  
Mike Mohajer, Los Angeles County Integrated Waste Management Task Force  
Ben Lucha, City of Palmdale  
Ron Kent, rep by Paul Ghougassian, Southern California Gas Company  
Christopher Sheppard, Los Angeles County Public Works  
Eugene Tseng, UCLA Solid Waste Program  
Dennis Montano, Republic Services  
Steve Cassulo, Waste Connections

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS NOT PRESENT:

Alex Helou, City of Los Angeles  
Kay Martin, Bioenergy Producers Association  
Rob Williams, UC Davis Policy Institute for Energy, Environment and the Economy

OTHERS PRESENT:

Christine Arbogast, Tetra Tech  
Bernard C. Fenner, True North Renewables  
Paulina Kolic, California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery  
(CalRecycle)  
Frank Lauro, True North Renewables  
Nam Doan, Los Angeles County Public Works  
Carol Oyola, Los Angeles County Public Works  
Coby Skye, Los Angeles County Public Works  
Kawsar Vazifdar, Los Angeles County Public Works  
Jeffrey Zhu, Los Angeles County Public Works

## **I. CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Christopher Sheppard called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m.

## **II. APPROVAL OF MARCH 18, 2021 SUBCOMMITTEE MINUTES**

A motion to approve the minutes from the March 18, 2021 meeting was made by Mr. Mike Mohajer and seconded by Mr. Mark McDannel. The motion passed unanimously.

## **III. PRESENTATION – TRUE NORTH RENEWABLES (TNRE)**

Mr. Bernard C. Fenner and Mr. Frank Lauro of True North Renewable Energy (TNRE) gave a presentation on their company that develops, builds, owns, and/or operates anaerobic digestion (AD) facilities that convert organic waste into compost and renewable energy or fuels. TNRE is currently developing facilities in the Antelope Valley of Los Angeles County as well as in San Bernardino County and Imperial County.

Mr. Wayne Hunter asked who will be providing the technology for the new facilities. Mr. Fenner responded that they have released a request for information for technology suppliers. Mr. Hunter asked about the cost for a facility that processes 600,000 tons of organic waste per year. Mr. Fenner responded that the approximate cost is \$300 million and that the projects will be financed. Mr. Hunter asked if TNRE can acquire financing for the three new facilities. Mr. Fenner responded that acquiring financing is dependent on whether they can secure feedstock.

Mr. McDannel asked what type of feedstock TNRE is looking to secure. Mr. Fenner responded that they would prefer mixed green and food waste, food waste only, or residual organic waste from materials recovery facilities (MRFs). Mr. McDannel asked if TNRE plans to separate organic waste from black bin trash. Mr. Fenner responded that they do not.

Mr. Tseng asked if TNRE has considered utilizing excess AD capacity at wastewater treatment plants to process organic waste. Mr. Fenner responded that they are not currently working with existing wastewater treatment facilities because co-digestion can sometimes interfere with the core function of wastewater treatment facilities.

Ms. Michelle Dewey asked if the biogas will be used for transportation fuel, pipeline injection, or onsite fueling. Mr. Lauro responded that TNRE will upgrade the biogas and inject it into the pipeline to be used as transportation fuel. He added that they may use some of the biogas for combined heat and power. He also stated that each site has access to a natural gas pipeline.

Mr. Sheppard asked if TNRE is considering on-site fueling stations for vehicle fleets. Mr. Fenner said they would, depending on market demand. Mr. Sheppard inquired about the tipping fees for the new facilities. Mr. Fenner responded that he could not share the potential tipping fees at this time.

Mr. Mohajer asked if TNRE uses only the residuals that remain after AD to create compost. Mr. Fenner responded that they mix the residuals from AD with carbon-rich green waste that is not suitable for AD as a bulking agent. Mr. Mohajer asked if TNRE foresees using their composting process to manage green materials as defined by CalRecycle in Title 14, including tree and yard trimmings, untreated wood wastes, natural fiber products, wood waste from silviculture and manufacturing, and construction and demolition wood waste. Mr. Fenner responded that they only use green waste from residential collection.

Mr. Sheppard asked about the preferred length of feedstock agreements. Mr. Fenner responded that the facilities are expected to operate for up to 30 years, so the minimum would be 5 years but 10 years or greater with potential extensions would be preferable for financing.

Mr. Mohajer inquired if the facilities can handle cannabis waste. Mr. Fenner responded that it is technologically feasible but that he is not up to date on the legal concerns.

Ms. Dewey added that CalRecycle has a Recycling Market Development Zone (RMDZ) team that may be able to assist TNRE and answer questions regarding feedstock agreements. Mr. Lauro responded that TNRE had coordinated with the RMDZ team for one of their facilities and plans to do so for their other facilities as well.

#### **IV. UPDATE ON CONVERSION TECHNOLOGY POLICY AND LEGISLATION**

Mr. Nam Doan gave an update on policy and legislation and various webinars that CalRecycle will be hosting:

- CalRecycle will be holding their public monthly meeting on Tuesday, April 20, 2021. An update on SB 1383 (Short-Lived Climate Pollutants) and AB 341 (Mandatory Commercial Recycling) and AB 1826 (Mandatory Commercial Organics Recycling) will be provided at next month's ATAS meeting.
- CalRecycle is hosting two webinars on SB 1383 requirements.
  - For Non-Local Entities on Wednesday, April 28, 2021, from 9 a.m. – 10 a.m.
  - For Local Education Agencies on Wednesday, April 28, 2021, from 10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
  - This webinar will help attendees understand the requirements and will provide an opportunity for attendees to ask questions.
  - To register, visit the CalRecycle Short-Lived Climate Pollutants website.

## **V. UPDATE ON CONVERSION TECHNOLOGY EVENTS/MEETINGS/OUTREACH ACTIVITIES**

Mr. Doan mentioned the following conferences, which are also linked in the Conversion Technology (CT) newsletter and will be included in the Subcommittee meeting minutes:

- Biogas Americas Live: May 4 - 27, 2021, Tuesday and Thursday afternoons, virtual
- RNG Summit: May 11, 2021, Fort Worth, TX
- SoCal SWANA Chapter Workshop: Safety Summit: May 13, 2021, virtual
- SoCal SWANA Chapter Workshop: Disaster Recovery: June 10, 2021, virtual
- WasteExpo: June 28 - 30, 2021, Las Vegas, NV
- Resource Recycling Conference & Trade Show: August 4 - 6, 2021, Austin, TX

## **VI. UPDATE ON CONVERSION TECHNOLOGY PROJECT DEVELOPMENT**

Ms. Christine Abrogast stated that Tetra Tech has been:

- Continuing to support Public Works in analyzing environmental benefits of AD projects that divert organic waste from landfills.
- Finishing up responses to the Subcommittee's comments on a Fact Sheet comparing AD development in the Europe vs. the United States.

## **VII. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

No comments.

## **VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 10:56 a.m. The next ATAS meeting is tentatively scheduled remotely for Thursday, May 20, 2021, at 10 a.m.