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California Releases 2012 Bioenergy Action Plan

SACRAMENTO – California state agencies today released the 2012 Bioenergy Action Plan to accelerate clean energy development, job creation, and protection of public health and safety.

Bioenergy is energy produced from organic waste such as agricultural, forest and urban wastes that would otherwise go into landfills or be burned. Increasing production of bioenergy in California can create thousands of new jobs, especially in rural areas that have been hit hard by the economic downturn. Bioenergy also helps to protect public health and safety by reducing the risk of wildfires and the pollution from landfills, dairies, wastewater treatment facilities, and other organic wastes.

“Swift action on bioenergy will create jobs, increase local clean energy supplies, and help businesses grow in California,” said California Natural Resources Secretary John Laird. “Increasing bioenergy opportunities will also help California meet its climate change goals and protect public health and safety.”

The 2012 Bioenergy Action Plan was developed by state agencies and outside experts under the leadership of Governor Brown’s Office. The state agencies responsible for developing and implementing the plan are the Natural Resources Agency, Department of Food and Agriculture, California Environmental Protection Agency, California Public Utilities Commission, California Energy Commission, Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), CalRecycle, and the State Water Resources Control Board.

The plan contains more than 50 recommended actions to increase the sustainable use of organic waste, expand research and development of bioenergy facilities, reduce permitting and regulatory challenges, and address economic barriers to bioenergy development. The plan will help facilitate the creation of more than 4,000 jobs and help California meet its clean energy, waste reduction and climate change goals.

“Bioenergy is an exciting new frontier for agriculture,” said Karen Ross, Secretary of the California Department of Food and Agriculture. “It creates jobs, reduces energy costs and reduces pollution. Early adopters are already realizing these benefits and are blazing the path towards self-sufficiency for agriculture.”

Expanding bioenergy development benefits California agriculture by providing an onsite or local source of clean energy, either electricity or liquid fuels for farm and other vehicles. Technologies such as anaerobic digestion also reduce waste and pollutants from dairies, agricultural trimmings and residues, and food

processing operations. Bioenergy generation can also produce biochar, a valuable soil amendment that can be used in place of chemical fertilizers.

“Wildfire is increasing dramatically in California, but there are ways we can reduce the risk to public health, safety and property,” said CAL FIRE Chief Ken Pimlott. “Generating energy from forest waste helps to reduce dangerous fuel loads in our forests while providing jobs and local energy supplies in forest communities.”

Wildfire is an increasing threat in many parts of California, costing hundreds of millions of dollars per year in fire suppression and property losses, not to mention impacts on public health and safety. One of the most important and cost-effective ways to reduce forest fire hazards is to generate energy from forest biomass collected to reduce dangerous fuel loads. Using forest biomass to generate energy protects health, safety and property while providing jobs, income and local energy supplies.

California currently produces about 600 megawatts of electricity and 50 to 100 million gasoline gallon equivalents from organic waste each year. Bioenergy facilities employ about 5,000 people and contribute \$575 million to the California economy. By reducing the economic and regulatory barriers to bioenergy development in California, the Bioenergy Action Plan will help to nearly double these numbers.

“The state of California has the most comprehensive and thoughtful bioenergy policies in the world,” said Michele Wong, Chief Executive Officer of Sacramento’s Clean World Partners. “By coordinating waste, energy and air quality, we are in the midst of a technology revolution that will dramatically reduce garbage and pollution while creating a clean energy future.”

Clean World Partners – which builds facilities that transform food and green waste to renewable energy and soil amendments – will break ground in September on its third major commercial facility this year.

“Our company has created 30 clean tech jobs this year and stands to create more than 400 jobs in the next three years,” continued Wong.

To read the executive summary or full 2012 Bioenergy Action Plan, go to:

http://resources.ca.gov/energy_and_climate_change/

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