

Renewable natural gas key to helping California meet state regulation, say renewable natural gas companies

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California, US's energy and biogas industry leaders met today at the Power of Waste conference to emphasise the importance of renewable natural gas (RNG) in helping the state meet its renewable energy, greenhouse gas reduction, and clean air goals.

In addition to the state's new law requiring all renewable and zero-carbon resources for electric generation by 2045, another law, Senate Bill (SB) 1440, requires the state's Public Utilities Commission and Air Resources Board to consider adopting biomethane procurement targets for gas companies in the state.

The conference, hosted jointly by Southern California Gas Co. (SoCalGas), Pacific Gas and Electric Co. (PG&E), and the national nonprofit organisation Energy Vision, provided a look into successful biomethane development and its growth potential in California. The event was held at SoCalGas' Energy Resource Center in Downey, California.

RNG can be produced from waste at landfills, wastewater treatment plants, food processing and dairies. The California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle) estimates 50 to 100 new or expanded anaerobic digestion and composting facilities will be developed in California to meet the 75% organics diversion goal by 2025 required by state law (SB 1383).

According to a recent study by Navigant Consulting Inc., replacing approximately 16% of the traditional natural gas supply with renewable gas can achieve greenhouse gas (GHG) reductions equivalent to converting 100% of buildings to electric-only energy by 2030. By using a mix of both in- and out-of-state resources, a RNG strategy is about three times more cost effective in reducing GHGs than an electrification pathway. RNG is available day and night to complement other renewable energy sources like solar and wind, making the entire energy system cleaner and more reliable.

"Renewable natural gas can cost-effectively reduce greenhouse gas emissions, short-lived climate pollutants and criteria pollutants to help meet California's climate and clean air goals," said Yuri Freedman, senior director of business development for SoCalGas. "And the latest state legislation means this renewable fuel is primed for further development."

Joanna Underwood, founder and board member of Energy Vision, said: "The California Air Resources Board and Argonne National Labs have both verified RNG can be net-carbon negative over its lifecycle, with more greenhouse gases being captured to make the fuel than are emitted by burning it. So making and using RNG doesn't just slow the accumulation of atmospheric GHG; it can actually help roll it back. As a transportation

fuel, it can cut health-damaging particulate, NO_x and SO_x emissions to close to zero. California is the major market for RNG in the US, but it has yet to make much of it in-state. RNG represents a tremendous opportunity for California to turn its waste into energy, meet its climate goals and improve its air quality."