



ENERGY VISION 138 East 13th Street New York, NY 10003

Tel: 212-228-0225 Web: energy-vision.org Twitter: @Energy_Vision

*STATEMENT BY ENERGY VISION IN CONSULTATIVE STATUS
WITH THE UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL*

2021 Session

13 July 2021 – 16 July 2021

Agenda item 5

ECOSOC High-level Segment

Theme: Sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic that promotes the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development

A resilient green recovery depends on ambitious global goals, nation-states acting to implement those goals, and incentives mobilizing the creative skills of the private sector. With the United States fully re-committed to the Paris Agreement, with bold new targets for emissions reductions to advance the 2030 Agenda, it is critically important to deploy solutions available NOW that will allow us to meet our targets on schedule.

Energy Vision's mission, since its founding in 2007 as an environmental not-for-profit organization, has been to explore, publicize and promote the most rapid paths to a sustainable global energy and transportation future. Our current primary focus is on one particularly exciting strategy: producing biomethane by extracting and refining the methane biogases produced as organic wastes decompose in every urban and rural corner of the globe.

To limit global warming to 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels, a key goal must be reducing emissions of methane, one of the most potent greenhouse gases. The 1.3 billion tons of food waste generated around the world a year, the huge streams of manure from global livestock populations, and the vast amounts of sewage generated by humans -- all emit significant amounts of methane as they decompose, which represents a major climate liability. However, that methane can become a valuable energy resource when captured as biogas, using anaerobic digesters.

Nations around the world are seeking clean, renewable fuel for various applications. Biomethane, the refined form of biogas, can help meet their needs and serve as a

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climate solution. Lifecycle emissions from biomethane can be not just carbon neutral, but net-carbon-negative—when more greenhouse gases are captured in producing the fuel than are emitted by burning it. Additionally, the organic material left over from the anaerobic digestion process is a valuable nutrient-rich soil amendment that can displace chemical fertilizers.

Commercial technologies are available today to process organics and to put their clean energy and compost products to use. And every vehicle or appliance converted from fossil fuels to biomethane will immediately meet the Paris Climate Goals.

Since trapping methane biogases from decomposing organics in anaerobic digestion offers a key strategy for achieving Paris Accord targets, we recommend that:

- We fully endorse the 2030 UN target to reduce food waste by 50%. Governments should implement food recovery and redistribution programs to ensure that edible food is consumed by people.
- A secondary target should be introduced to address the remaining 50% of food waste by mandating the collection of food from businesses and households that can't be eaten, plus all other sources of municipal and agricultural organic waste, and direct them to anaerobic digestion or compost facilities.
- To advance this second goal and address the other 50% of food waste, member states should prioritize a suite of regulatory and legislative actions, including:
 - incentivize the installment of on-site anaerobic digesters at wastewater treatment plants, so the methane biogases captured can be used to generate energy for the treatment plants or surrounding communities,
 - implement taxes or bans to keep organic wastes out of landfills,
 - mandate low-carbon fuel standards to promote the production and use of sustainable fuels including biomethane, and
 - mandate that a growing percentage of the natural gas bought and sold in a given jurisdiction be in the form of biomethane.