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March 23, 2005

The Honorable Russ Bogh
Member, California State Assembly
State Capitol, Room 4098
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Assembly Bill 177 - SUPPORT

Dear Assembly Member Bogh:

On behalf of the 30 member counties of the Regional Council of Rural Counties (RCRC), I am writing to express our support for your Assembly Bill 177 relating to biomass conversion of green waste and other organic materials that would otherwise be landfilled.

Under existing law, local jurisdictions are required to implement all feasible programs designed to divert at least 50% of its waste generation from landfill disposal. There are, however, statutory limitations on the material types and level of "diversion credit" that a jurisdiction may claim for the portion of its waste stream that is used as fuel at biomass conversion facilities. By removing these existing statutory limitations, AB 177 would create an incentive for businesses and local governments to divert biomass material from landfills by allowing for its productive use as fuel at biomass conversion facilities. This would, in turn, help to reduce the State's dependence on other energy resources.

This bill would be particularly beneficial for the rural areas of California that have a relatively small waste stream and that are located distant from large scale composting processing facilities. Additionally, passage of AB 177 would help property owners and government agencies by creating a local, cost-effective means of handling green waste and forest debris that result from clearing around homes and elsewhere for fire control and prevention. Most of these cleared materials are of insufficient "organic" quality for use as feedstock for commercial composting operations. These materials do, however, have a relatively high heat content and are ideally suited for productive use in biomass conversion facilities.

RCRC appreciates your introduction of this measure. Please feel free to contact John Hofmann at (916) 447-4806 if you have any questions or comments.

Sincerely,

Patricia Megason

Patricia Megason
Vice President of Governmental Affairs