



COUNTY OF LAKE
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
Courthouse - 255 North Forbes Street
Lakeport, California 95453
TELEPHONE (707) 263-2368
FAX (707) 263-2207

Helen Owen – District 1

Bruno Sabatier – District 2

Eddie Crandell – District 3

Brad Rasmussen – District 4

Jessica Pyska – District 5

May 6, 2025

Honorable Governor Gavin Newsom
1021 O St, Ste. 9000
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SUPPORT – Extension and Full Implementation of the BioMAT Program

Dear Governor Newsom:

You will have recently received the attached coalition letter from Rural County Representatives of California, Calaveras County, the California Forestry Association, the California Compost Coalition and others in Support of Extension and Full Implementation of the BioMAT Program (attached). The County of Lake joins those coalition members in asking your SUPPORT of extension and full implementation of the BioMAT Program.

In March 2024, our County, through the Lake County Community Risk Reduction Authority, was honored to be invited to join your Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation's (*then-identified as the "Office of Planning and Research's"*) statewide Biomass Aggregation Pilot Project. We truly appreciate your recognition of the need and opportunity present in Lake County. Biomass utilization has been a long-standing priority of the Lake County Community Risk Reduction Authority (RRA) and the County of Lake, including development of local capacity to utilize waste woody biomass through production of Biochar, wood chips for agricultural permaculture uses, and to produce energy. In 2021, Lake County became the first California jurisdiction to complete the United States Forest Service's Community Mitigation Assistance Team (CMAT) process, and Biomass utilization emerged as a key Mitigation Priority from that process.

As you are aware, waste woody biomass can be utilized to produce energy, providing firm renewable power while offering climate resiliency benefits. The State's BioMAT program is an important accelerant of BioEnergy development, in that it requires procurement of 250 Megawatts of energy from new, small-scale bioenergy projects. Yet, our understanding is only 20% of the required megawatts have been procured, to date. California-based entities have received \$30 million in Federal funding that hinges on full BioMAT implementation. If no action is taken, the BioMAT program will sunset as of December 31, 2025, and it is expected much of that \$30 million will have to be returned to the Federal Government.

Please act to further statewide climate goals by directing the California Public Utilities Commission to fully implement the BioMAT program, as required by state law.

Respectfully,

Chair
Lake County Board of Supervisors
COUNTY OF LAKE

Cc: Honorable California State Senate President pro Tempore, Mike McGuire; Honorable Assembly Majority Leader, Cecilia Aguiar-Curry

We are writing on behalf of the undersigned associations, agencies and organizations to urge you to extend the BioMAT program, a legislatively established program that requires procurement of 250 megawatts from new small-scale bioenergy projects. BioMAT projects provide firm renewable power while helping to mitigate wildfires, reduce landfill waste, cut air and climate pollution, protect water supply and quality, and create good jobs and the circular economy. Your *California Jobs First* plan highlights several BioMAT projects and two BioMAT projects have received Jobs First funding. Several of the state's climate, wildfire mitigation and air quality plans call for full implementation of BioMAT. State law also requires the BioMAT to be fully implemented, yet the CPUC has set a sunset date of December 31, 2025 while only 20 percent of the

required megawatts have been procured. We urge you to direct the CPUC to fully implement the BioMAT program in compliance with state law and to provide the many benefits highlighted below.

1. BioMAT is Required by State Law.

The BioMAT program was established by SB 1122 (Rubio, 2012), which contains no end date or other offramps. The Legislature has revised the program several times, but at no time has it weakened the requirements of that law, set a program end date, or given the CPUC any grounds to end the program when only 50 of the 250 required megawatts have been procured to date.

2. BioMAT Provides Firm, Renewable Power Needed for Energy Reliability.

The BioMAT program provides firm, renewable power that is essential for energy reliability. The CEC has determined that California will need up to 15,000 megawatts of firm power for reliability and other studies estimate that the need will be even greater. The CPUC itself has set a procurement mandate of 1,000 megawatts of firm power and the state is far behind in meeting that requirement. If fully implemented, BioMAT could provide one-quarter of those required megawatts, helping to boost energy reliability.

3. BioMAT Projects Mitigate Wildfires that are Driving Rate Increases.

BioMAT projects in the forest sector help mitigate wildfires by providing a beneficial use of forest waste that would otherwise contribute to wildfires or be pile burned. Several of the state's wildfire and forest health plans have called for full implementation of the BioMAT program to help mitigate wildfires, including the *California Forest Carbon Plan* and the Board of Forestry's 2020 Biomass Utilization Plan. Not only do forest BioMAT projects protect public health and safety, but they also help to address the increasing impact of wildfires on electricity rates. According to the CPUC's recent affordability report (*CPUC Response to Executive Order N.5-24.*), wildfires are the single biggest driver of rate increases and forest BioMAT projects can help to mitigate wildfires.

4. BioMAT Projects Help Protect the Climate, Air and Water Quality.

California's resource and environmental agencies have long recognized the benefits of bioenergy for the climate, air quality, and water quality and supply. The *California Short-Lived Climate Pollutant Reduction Strategy* and the *California Forest Carbon Plan* call directly for BioMAT implementation. The *2022 Climate Change Scoping Plan* also calls for increased bioenergy as one of the biggest opportunities to generate carbon negative emissions. The Air Board's plan to phase out open burning of agricultural waste also calls for increased bioenergy. And the attached letter from the Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA) highlights the benefits to water quality and supply that BioMAT projects can provide.

5. BioMAT Projects Provide Good, Permanent Jobs and Build a Circular Economy.

Your recently released *California Jobs First* plan highlights three BioMAT projects that have received \$30 million in federal funding, most of which will have to be returned to

the Federal Government if the BioMAT program is not extended. The Sierra Jobs First governing council has also awarded funding to two BioMAT projects. This recognition highlights the jobs and economic value of bioenergy projects. According to a recent report by the Clean Air Task Force, bioenergy provides more jobs than other renewables and a higher proportion of those jobs are permanent, high paying jobs that provide long-term benefits for families and communities and help to build a circular economy.

6. The CPUC's Own Report Shows that BioMAT Costs are Negligible.

The CPUC's recent affordability report makes clear that the BioMAT program – even if fully implemented – would result in less than negligible ratepayer costs. According to the CPUC report, BioMAT costs a few pennies per household per month compared to solar and wind power, even though BioMAT projects do not require backup generation or energy storage. If comparing the average BioMAT costs to other firm renewables, the difference is zero and more than offset by the direct ratepayer benefits of wildfire mitigation, generation of carbon negative emissions, and protection of water supplies.

For all these reasons, the undersigned sincerely urge you to direct the CPUC to fully implement the BioMAT program as required by state law.

Associations:

Nick Blair
Association of California Water Agencies

Michael Boccadoro
Agricultural Energy Consumers Association

Sarah Deslauriers
California Association of Sanitation Districts

Matt Dias
California Forestry Association

John Kennedy
Rural County Representatives of California

Veronica Pardo
Resource Recovery Coalition of California

Julia Levin
Bioenergy Association of California

Evan Edgar
California Compost Coalition

Tracy Hernandez
New California Coalition

Steve Frisch
Sierra Business Council

Tribes, Air Quality and Fire Protection Districts, Local Government:

Thomas Jordan
Scotts Valley Energy Corp / Scotts Valley Band of Pomo Indians

Ales Tomaier
Mammoth Lakes Fire Protection District

Hilary Hodge
City of Grass Valley

Julie Hunter
Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District

Eric White
Placer County Air Pollution Control District

Alberto Ayala
Sacramento Metro Regional Air District

Water Agencies:

Joel Metzger
Utica Water and Power Authority

Michael Minkler
Calaveras County Water District

Willie Whittlesey
Yuba Water Agency

Larry McKenney
Amador Water Agency

David Coxey
Bella Vista Water District

Conservation, Circular Economy and Community Groups:

Sharmie Stevenson
Fall River Resource Conservation District

David Mecchi
Mariposa County Resource Conservation District

Julia Sullivan
Lake County Resource Conservation District

Sharmie Stevenson
Pit River Resource Conservation District

C.J. Nord, C.P.M., CSCP
Founder, Supply Chains for Good
Enrolled member, Standing Rock

Nick Goulette
Watershed Research & Training Center

Jan Maes
Sierra Energy Re-Imagined

Cathy LeBlanc
Camptonville Community Partnership

Janet Hatfield
Whitebark Institute

Regine Miller
Headwaters Environmental

Community Choice Aggregators:

Sam Kang
Pioneer Community Energy

Beth Burks
Redwood Coast Energy Authority

Bioenergy Developers, Waste and Recycling Companies:

Patty Garbarino
Marin Sanitary Services

Greg Kelley
Napa Recycling & Waste Services
Northern Recycling

Thomas Gratz
Kanadevia Inova

Etienne Patenaude
Tuolumne BioEnergy

Bob Kinghorn
Stellar J

Jeff Durtschi
Omni Bioenergy

Scott Sellner, on behalf of:
Biggs Bioenergy, LLC
Hat Creek Bioenergy, LLC
Mammoth Bioenergy, LLC
Mariposa Bioenergy, LLC

Ross Buckenham
California Bioenergy

Dave Salem
Brad Thompson Co.

Greg Stangl
Phoenix Energy

Adam Wright
Vespene Energy

Jay Johnson
Mariposa Biomass Project

Fred Tornatore
TSS Consultants

Joao Mario Soares
Engeman Energy USA LLC

Tom Hobby
Yosemite Clean Energy

Mackenzie Castruita
West Biofuels

Lindsey Nitta
Forest Biomass Business Center