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**BOARD OF
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COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

July 30, 2021

The Honorable Anthony Portantino
Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee
State Capitol, Room 2206
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AB 843 (Aguiar-Curry) - SUPPORT

Dear Senator Portantino:

I am writing on behalf of the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors to state our support for Assembly Bill 843 (Aguiar-Curry), which will allow Community Choice Aggregators (CCAs) to access an existing state program that provides funding for renewable bioenergy electricity projects, including biomass and biogas. AB 843 does not propose any structural changes to the existing bioenergy program and allows for similar regulatory oversight of the program with the new applicants as currently administered.

The BioMAT program was created by SB 1122 (2012, Rubio) to support procurement from small-scale bioenergy projects, including wastewater treatment, agricultural bioenergy, and generation from byproducts of sustainable forest management. The program was only made available to investor-owned utilities because at the time, there was only one CCA serving customers. In the decade since, 23 new CCAs have launched and now serve more than 11 million customers across California.

Allowing CCAs access to the BioMAT program will enable them to purchase more renewable baseload resources and contribute to greater grid reliability. Bioenergy resources are considered especially stable because the power is available 24/7. Bioenergy is generated from organic waste, cuts greenhouse gas emissions, reduces catastrophic wildfires, helps divert waste from landfills, and generates 2 to 6 times as many jobs as fossil fuel-based power.

Separately, cities and counties are currently implementing SB 1383 (2016, Lara), which sets targets for reducing short-lived climate pollutants including methane and black carbon. One of the potential compliance pathways a city or county can take to reduce these short-lived pollutants is through bioenergy. Some local governments have expressed interest in exploring bioenergy with their CCAs, but these projects are usually cost-prohibitive for CCAs without support from the BioMAT program.

AB 843 provides an opportunity for CCA's to purchase more baseload renewable resources, contributing to grid reliability as California's energy mix becomes increasingly intermittent. It also offers local sanitation and waste agencies a way to meet state and local methane reduction goals. The bill enables CCA's to access power from bioenergy facilities that their customers are already supporting. AB 843 proposes no structural changes to the existing BioMAT program. It does not raise the 250 MW cap or change the size of eligible facilities. CPUC oversight of funds used for CCA bioenergy contracts would be similar to that of IOU bioenergy contracts.

The Board of Supervisors adopted a 2021 Legislative Platform that includes Energy and Climate Plank that specifically states that the County will support legislation that is favorable to local energy efficiency, renewable energy, energy storage, electrification initiatives, and Community Choice Energy programs.

For these reasons, the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors is pleased to support AB 843. If you have questions about the Board's position, please contact the County's Legislative Coordinator, Jasmine McGinty at 805-568-3108 or jmcginty@countyofsb.org. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Cliff Berg
Governmental Advocates, Inc.

cc: The Honorable Cecilia Aguiar-Curry, Author
Honorable Members, Senate Appropriations Committee
Ashley Ames, Consultant, Senate Appropriations Committee
Kerry Yoshida, Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus
The Honorable Senator Monique Limon, 19th Senate District
The Honorable Assemblymember Steve Bennett, 37th Assembly District
The Honorable Assemblymember Jordan Cunningham, 35th Assembly District
Tom Habashi, Chief Executive Officer, Central Coast Community Energy (3CE)
Heather Vowell, Executive Assistant, Central Coast Community Energy (3CE)
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