

Hydrogen Means Business in California!

March 3, 2021

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The Honorable Chris Holden, Chair
 Utilities & Energy Committee
 California State Assembly
 Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Support for Assembly Bill 322 (Salas)

Dear Chair Holden:

I am writing on behalf of the California Hydrogen Business Council (CHBC)ⁱ to ask the Utilities Committee to pass Assembly Bill (AB) 322, which the CHBC supports.

AB 322 will help meet California’s health and climate goals, reducing some of the most damaging climate and air pollutants, accelerating the transition to advanced biomass energy technologies, and reducing catastrophic wildfires.

This bill requires the California Energy Commission to allocate 20 percent of the Electricity Program Investment Charge (EPIC) funding to biomass energy. That funding would prioritize advanced technology adoption that reduces air pollution like renewable hydrogen, provides carbon negative emissions, and produces beneficial coproducts such as biochar. Making these investments will help California achieve its air quality, climate change, waste reduction, and clean energy policies.

California generates enormous woody and cellulosic waste, from forest thinning and other vegetation removed for wildfire mitigation, agricultural waste, and urban wood waste. Often, this waste biomass is burned in controlled burns or increasingly in wildfires, which emit Short-Lived Climate Pollutants (SLCP), such as black carbon. When left in piles to rot or sent to a landfill, this waste releases methane, which is also a highly damaging SLCP. Both black carbon and methane are also serious air pollutants that harm public health, agriculture, and forest health.

California relies on SLCP reduction for more than one-third of all the carbon reductions needed to meet the state's 2030 climate targets. The State's Short-Lived Climate Pollutant Reduction Strategy and the California Forest Carbon Plan call specifically for the increased conversion of organic waste to energy to reduce black carbon and methane emissions. According to the California Forest Carbon Plan, converting biomass to energy cuts both black carbon and methane emissions by 98 percent compared to open burning or wildfires. Biomass energy can also reduce or even eliminate smog-forming pollutants using gasification and fuel cell technology.

The Forest Biomass Utilization Plan, adopted by the California Board of Forestry in 2020, recommends allocating 20 percent of EPIC funding to biomass conversion. With such dedicated funding, the adoption of advanced and cleaner technologies will accelerate, reduce emissions, and have the potential to provide negative carbon emissions by reducing open burning and producing biochar, which can sequester carbon permanently.

AB 322 will stimulate jobs, economic development, and increased energy security in many rural and urban regions that generate woody biomass.

For all these reasons, the CHBC asks the Committee to pass AB 322.

Sincerely,



Bill Zobel
Executive Director
California Hydrogen Business Council

ⁱⁱ The CHBC is comprised of over 120 companies and agencies involved in the business of hydrogen. Our mission is to advance the commercialization of hydrogen in the energy sector, including transportation, goods movement, and stationary power systems, to reduce emissions and dependence on oil. **The views expressed in these comments are those of the CHBC and do not necessarily reflect the views of all of the individual CHBC member companies.** CHBC Members are listed here: www.californiahydrogen.org/aboutus/chbc-members/