September 7, 2018

The Honorable Edmund G. Brown, Jr.
Governor of California
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 1440 (Hueso): Signature Request

Dear Governor Brown:

The California Association of Sanitation Agencies (CASA) respectfully requests your signature on SB 1440 (Hueso), which would direct the California Public Utilities Commission (PUC) to consider adopting a statewide biomethane procurement program. CASA is an association of California wastewater agencies engaged in advancing the recycling of wastewater into usable water, maximizing the beneficial use of biosolids, generating renewable energy, and producing other valuable resources.

Wastewater agencies have a distinct role in California’s effort to meet the goals for short-lived climate pollutants (SLCP) and greenhouse gases (GHG) set in SB 1383 (Lara, 2016) for achieving a reduction in the statewide emissions of methane by 40 percent. As part of the wastewater treatment process, naturally occurring methane is captured during the anaerobic digestion of sludge. This methane may then be beneficially reused, or some in certain cases is destroyed (flared). Additionally, wastewater agencies may choose to utilize existing anaerobic digester capacity to co-digest food waste and other organic waste, which results in increased biogas production. In fact, CASA estimates that our members could accept at least 75% of food waste currently sent to landfills for co-digestion in existing anaerobic digestion systems.

However, absent a reliable market for wastewater biogas, multi-beneficial projects like the ones mentioned can be difficult to move forward. This is particularly true for biomethane pipeline injection, which currently is too cost-prohibitive for public agencies, in part because there is no market certainty. For this reason, CASA is supportive of SB 1440, which could help to establish a market for the biomethane generated and captured at wastewater facilities.

CASA has long advocated for public policies that encourage the beneficial reuse of the byproducts of wastewater treatment process. SB 1440 provides clear direction to the PUC in considering the adoption of a biomethane procurement program. The important considerations outlined in the bill include encouraging in-state production of biomethane and setting targets that are cost effective and help meet the state’s SLCP and GHG goals, and this bill would advance these objectives if the PUC process leads to establishing a new market for the in-state production and use of biomethane.

For these reasons, CASA supports SB 1440 and respectfully requests your signature on the bill.

Sincerely,

Jessica Gauger
Director of Legislative Advocacy

CC: The Honorable Ben Hueso