

Climate

NWRA POSITION

NWRA recognizes the importance of reducing greenhouse gas emissions to limit the impacts of climate change while supporting policies that recognize the challenges of quantifying landfill emissions and the emissions reduction strategies that our industry already has incorporated within our facility and fleet operations.

BACKGROUND

The waste and recycling industry has made immense strides over the last three decades that has turned it into a modern marvel. The industry is constantly developing new technologies to reduce emissions from all of its operations, whether they are highly sophisticated civil engineered solid waste landfills, recycling facilities, composting/organics management programs/facilities or clean fuel vehicle fleets with near zero emissions. It understands that issues pertaining to climate do not stop at state or national borders, so we must all be a part of the solution.

Landfill facilities are subject to extensive and evolving federal, state and local environmental requirements. The waste and recycling industry has made significant investments to ensure that landfills are designed, constructed and operated to ensure the protection of the climate. Among these are the implementation of improved landfill gas collection technologies and renewable energy facilities.

Likewise, waste-to-energy facilities' emissions are expected to be in full compliance with ambient air standards. These emissions are continuously monitored, and periodic testing is also conducted to ensure strict compliance.

Recognizing the benefits of moving towards clean fuels, a growing number of companies in the waste and recycling industry are investing in collection vehicle fleets that run on electricity or natural gas. Currently, approximately 30 percent of existing collection vehicles run on natural gas and purchasers of new vehicles are going with electric as well as natural gas. Congress can help speed this process by enacting tax incentives for the waste and recycling industry to adopt electric vehicles similar to those already in existence for compressed natural gas vehicles.

NWRA members are increasingly fueling their fleets with renewable natural gas — biogas captured from landfill operations and organics processing facilities — that further benefits the climate through reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, smog-causing NOx emissions and diesel particulate matter. It is estimated that switching the entire industry fleet of more than 115,000 vehicles to alternative fuels could slash diesel fuel

consumption by as much as two billion gallons per year. NWRA members also are actively piloting electric vehicle technologies for eventual incorporation into their fleets as this field continues to evolve.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The waste and recycling industry is at its core one based upon environmental stewardship and has strived to protect the climate through new technologies and innovations.
- Modern landfills and organics processing facilities utilize advanced gas collection technologies that not only capture greenhouse gases, but can turn them into renewable energy sources that offer a double-benefit to the climate.
- Waste-to-energy plays a role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- Currently, 30 percent of existing collection vehicles run on natural gas and purchasers of new vehicles are going increasingly with electric and natural gas.
- NWRA backs tax incentives for industry adoption of electric vehicles similar to those already in existence for compressed natural gas vehicles.