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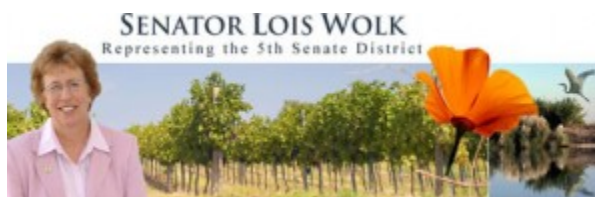
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October 10, 2011

Governor Brown Signs the Renewable Energy Equity Act!

On October 8, the Renewable Energy Equity Act (SB 489) became law in California. This CalCAN-sponsored bill makes it easier for farmers and ranchers to develop small-scale, distributed renewable energy projects by allowing them to easily and effectively connect to the grid. The Renewable Energy Equity Act will help California farmers and food processors lower their energy costs, produce homegrown clean, renewable energy and reduce our state's greenhouse gas emissions.

We are deeply grateful for the leadership of the author, Senator Lois Wolk, and her very capable staff for understanding the importance of this bill for California farmers and for the state's renewable energy goals. Two of CalCAN's farmer advisors have been leaders on the bill - Russ Lester and Jenny Lester-Moffitt at Dixon Ridge Farms have led the field with innovations in producing heat and electricity by gasifying walnut shells. Justin Malan (Ecoconsult) and Karen Mills (California Farm Bureau) also made this victory possible.



Here are two examples of the type of on-farm energy projects that will benefit from SB 489:

Dixon Ridge Farms, producer and processor of organic walnuts near Winters, uses walnut shells as the feedstock to produce heat from the gasification process to dry the walnuts and electricity to power their freezers (to keep the walnuts fresh and kill insect pests). Dixon Ridge has not been able to get their small-scale bioenergy project connected to the grid and credited for the energy they produce. Under SB 489, Dixon Ridge Farms will be credited on the farm's utility bill for the renewable energy produced. See:

<http://www.californiareport.org/archive/R201108250850/a>



Russ Lester and walnut shells ready to be turned into clean energy

Straus Family Dairy in Marin County installed a methane biodigester that produces electricity to power the dairy operation and their electric vehicles. SB 489 would enable these kinds of small-scale biogas projects to tie into the grid. Here is a short video about Straus Dairy's renewable energy project: <http://vimeo.com/15641142>

You can reach more about SB 489 on the [CalCAN website](#).

Support CalCAN in Next Steps

The passage of SB 489 is a great first step towards achieving more small-scale production of renewable energy from agricultural waste. But there is more work to do to implement the bill, and we hope you will make a [contribution to CalCAN](#)

to help us do it.

First, we need to ensure that the California Public Utilities Commission quickly writes the necessary rules to implement SB 489. Second, we need to educate farmers about the potential for installing biomass and biogas generators that use prunings, nut shells and food processing waste to produce energy, and provide resources about the role SB 489 plays in lowering the cost of such projects and permitting grid connection.

The CalCAN coalition is a nonprofit organization that relies on contributions from foundations, businesses and individuals. Please consider making a donation to help us ensure that SB 489 makes a real-world difference. Click [here](#) to make a tax-deductible donation.

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