It is my pleasure to welcome Governor Newsom, our statewide officers, and new and returning members of the Legislature to the start of the 2nd year of the 2019-20 Legislative Session. On behalf of the Resource Recovery Coalition of California, I am pleased to offer you this inaugural edition of our legislative newsletter. Although this is our coalition’s first newsletter, our members have an esteemed history as the Northern District of the California Refuse Recycling Council going back to 1964. We are very excited to introduce you to our newly named coalition and the important changes ahead.

The Resource Recovery Coalition of California members are engaged in waste diversion and recycling in Northern California. Under our new banner, coalition advocacy efforts will concentrate on regional needs as we undertake a number of regulatory and policy challenges. We will also work assiduously to highlight the growing complexity and importance of our industry. No longer simply haulers, our members manage resource recovery operations that combat climate change and help California meet its ambitious landfill diversion goals. Our new association name underscores this vital role and shift in the industry.

For decades, our members have been at the forefront of waste and recycling innovation in California. Our 33 member companies together manage nearly all aspects of the industry, from collection and processing, to compost and renewable energy production. Our members are integral to their communities and affect all residents and businesses in the more than 50 counties and cities they serve.

Many challenges lie ahead as we work to achieve the regulatory components of our organic waste recycling mandate (SB 1383) and build the necessary infrastructure to manage nearly 20 million additional tons of organics annually. In fact, CalRecycle’s updated cost scenarios present a potential gross cost of $40 billion statewide to collect, process and recover the amount of material required by statute. We look to the Administration and Legislature to support critical investments in organics management to achieve this monumental undertaking.

We also must work to build sustainable domestic market infrastructure to utilize our recyclable commodities and manage our material within California, so we no longer need to rely on overseas markets. With recent import restrictions under China’s National Sword Policy, material that was once easily recycled – such as fiber – no longer has a stable market. Without tangible investment in domestic markets, we continue to jeopardize California’s waste diversion goals and mandates.

Our members have a long history of supporting our communities and the environment as we advance California’s recycling infrastructure. From investments in advanced technology at the material recovery facility to production of renewable energy and compost from organics, our coalition members lead the state in waste and recycling innovation. We look forward to partnering with you this year to achieve our mutual goals and to strengthen the resiliency of California’s waste and recycling system. Our coalition members and staff always welcome opportunities to collaborate on meeting our shared state goals. Please don’t hesitate to reach out.

Bill Dobert
PRESIDENT
The solid waste and recycling industry began in California with scavengers reusing, repurposing and recycling most of what they collected. As plastics and disposable single-use convenience items became more prevalent, the industry shifted to more of a hauling and disposal model. It was cheap and it was easy. But now, as we try to solve the disposal and pollution problems our throwaway consumer culture created, the solid waste and recycling industry has returned to its scavenger roots. The materials we collect, the technology we use to process it, and the products we create from it may be a bit different than they were for those scavengers, but the industry, in a sense, has come full circle.

The Resource Recovery Coalition of California embodies this evolution of the industry and believes one person’s trash really is another person’s treasure. The coalition continues to build upon decades of lessons learned, technological advancements, and innovation to recover the highest value in all material collected, including recyclable and organic material. Our focus in 2020 is to expand upon many of the resource recovery programs our members have been developing for years. Some of these programs include:

• Recycling materials, such as plastic, that can be used to make more products, rather than drilling and refining oil, which has significant negative climate impacts, to make new plastic that will end up in the landfill.

• Recovering organic material to create compost and other soil amendments that can reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, reduce the amount of water that needs to be used in agriculture, and increase soil health and crop production at the same time.

• Anaerobically digesting organic material to create renewable, in-state natural gas that can be used either to provide energy to our facilities and communities or to create clean, low-emission transportation fuel that can be used in our own collection trucks and other heavy-duty vehicles. Increased use of natural gas over diesel will significantly reduce the GHG emissions and smog from diesel trucks that contribute to poor air quality in our communities.

• Diverting organic material in partnership with our local cities and counties to help California reach its waste diversion and GHG emissions reduction goals.

As a national and global leader of environmental policy, California has set very aggressive waste diversion goals, and we must all work together to achieve them.

Step one is sorting materials into the proper bin at the curb for collection, yet true recycling and waste diversion goes far beyond the curb. Overall success depends on how well we can process and prepare those materials to sell to markets for remanufacturing into new products and how strong the markets are. Continued investment in improving and expanding our material processing capabilities and developing domestic markets for that recyclable material is, therefore, critical to real resource recovery.

Additionally, investing in continuing our resource recovery programs has a positive economic impact. Collecting, processing, and manufacturing products with recycled material creates six to thirteen times the number of jobs that landfilling that same material creates. Therefore, in addition to the environmental benefits, investing in closing the loop on recyclable and organic material right here in California is crucial to the economic development of our local communities.

Our coalition members serve the same communities in which they live, and so have a vested interest in being excellent service providers, environmental stewards, and job creators. Investments in domestic market and processing infrastructure development will help our industry maximize our role in mitigating adverse climate impacts and creating climate resilient and economically strong communities.
Education and safety are two areas of particular importance to the Resource Recovery Coalition of California.

**The Next Generation!** The Next Generation Management and Leadership Program is an 8-month series of modules that is available to the next generation of managers and leaders in the refuse and recycling industry. The current class will graduate in May.

**Safety is First!** The Louie Pellegrini IV Memorial Safety Road-e-o (established in 1991) is a no cost, family-oriented event that includes competitions for drivers, mechanics and forklift operators; a carnival with community safety representatives teaching safety in our homes, waterways and roads; and prizes and awards for participants.