

Dear

Landfilling biodegradable materials, such as food, paper, yard trimmings and agricultural products, is greatly contributing to global warming. Thousands of tons of these biodegradable materials are landfilled in the County of San Diego every day. These materials amount to approximately half of our region's discarded resources, and when buried in a landfill, decompose without oxygen and generate methane, an efficient atmospheric heat-trapping gas and a major factor in climate change. Landfills are the number one source of human-caused methane in the United States and emit the greenhouse gas equivalent of 20 percent of our country's coal-fired power plants every year.

Discarded organic materials contain vast stores of macro and micro-nutrients needed by agricultural and natural ecosystems to replenish soils. Healthy soils restored with organic materials protect against flooding, erosion, and drought while bolstering agricultural yields. San Diego has many organic farms that require the healthier soils that can be produced through diverting organic materials from the landfill and returning the nutrients and organic matter back to farmland to grow its own. This is a critical component of re-creating a more sustainable society in our region. The quickest and cheapest way to immediately reduce our community's greenhouse gas emissions and improve the health of its soils is to divert compostable organics out of landfills.

I ask our City Council to pass a resolution to phase these materials out of our landfills by 2012, and SANDAG to develop a plan for how to best accomplish this and work with local agencies to encourage the use of compostable organics to sustain the health of our soils.

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