

Date of Hearing: January 22, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

AB 643 (Wilson) – As Amended January 14, 2026

Policy Committee: Natural Resources

Vote: 12 - 1

Urgency: No

State Mandated Local Program: No

Reimbursable: No

SUMMARY:

This bill allows a local jurisdiction to count organic material used as a beneficial agricultural amendment toward its recovered organic waste procurement target if the material meets specified conditions.

Specifically, this bill:

- 1) Authorizes a local jurisdiction to count organic material used as a beneficial agricultural amendment toward its recovered organic waste procurement target if the following conditions are met:
 - a) The material is processed at a facility authorized by the Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle) using technologies approved pursuant to specified statutory criteria and regulations.
 - b) The material is licensed for end use as an agricultural fertilizer by the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), as specified.
 - c) The material is not derived from, or processed using, activities that constitute “solid waste disposal,” “disposal,” or “transformation,” as specified.
- 2) Specifies that the amount of the procured materials subject to item 1, above, shall be calculated using the dry weight of the materials.

FISCAL EFFECT:

Implementation costs to CalRecycle are likely absorbable. Like this bill, AB 2902 (Wood), Chapter 421, Statutes of 2024, and AB 2346 (Lee), Chapter 712, Statutes of 2024, give jurisdictions greater flexibility to adjust procurement targets and expand the recovered organic waste products that are eligible procurement options under SB 1383 (Lara), Chapter 395, Statutes of 2016 (see background for more information). The 2025-26 state budget approved four new permanent positions for CalRecycle (Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund) to implement these bills. The workload associated with this bill – including any necessary regulatory updates, guidance development, and technical assistance to local jurisdictions – is likely absorbable within these recently approved resources.

In addition, as part of the Governor’s January budget proposal for fiscal year 2026-27, CalRecycle is requesting one permanent position (and \$188,000 from the Integrated Waste

Management Fund) to implement AB 1046 (Bains), Chapter 719, Statutes of 2025, to complete the full Administrative Procedure Act process for regulations on statewide mandatory organic waste collection, pursuant to SB 1383.

COMMENTS:

1) Purpose.

According to the author:

The Legislature has heard from many communities across the state that they are concerned they will struggle to meet their procurement targets under SB 1383. Increasing the eligibility of procurement products made from diverted organics will assist in jurisdictions in meeting their goals, provide positive impacts to the State's climate change objectives, and provides the agricultural community another tool to continue growing crops in our state.

2) Background.

Organic material accounts for more than a third of California's disposed waste stream. As this material decomposes in the state's landfills, it generates significant quantities of methane. Methane is a powerful short-lived climate pollutant (SLCP) that is 84 times more potent than carbon dioxide over a 20-year timescale. According to CalRecycle, landfills emit approximately 20% of the state's total methane emissions.

SB 1383 requires the Air Resources Board to approve and implement a comprehensive SLCP strategy to achieve, by 2030, the following reductions from 2013 levels: a 40% reduction in methane, a 40% reduction in hydrofluorocarbon gases, and a 50% reduction in anthropogenic black carbon. To accomplish these goals, the law specifies that the methane emission reduction goals include the following targets to reduce the landfill disposal of organic waste, including food: 50% from the 2014 level by 2020 and 75% from the 2014 level by 2025. The law also requires that by 2025, 20% of edible food that would otherwise be sent to landfills be redirected to feed people.

As detailed in the Assembly Natural Resources Committee analysis of this bill, to achieve these targets, California's waste management infrastructure will need to process and recycle much higher quantities of organic materials, involving significant investments in additional processing infrastructure. To ensure there are adequate markets for the state's increasing quantities of products made from organic waste, like mulch, compost, and digestate, CalRecycle established procurement requirements for local jurisdictions. The procurement targets are based on the average amount of organic waste generated by Californians annually multiplied by the population of a jurisdiction. Jurisdictions may meet the target by procuring, giving away, or arranging for the use of the material through contracts with direct service providers.

According to the California Association of Sanitation Agencies (CASA), which is in support of this bill, the state's sanitation agencies are responsible for managing the byproducts of the sewage treatment processes, including the treated solid residuals known as biosolids. CASA notes that following the passage of SB 1383, the regulatory development process to implement SB 1383 deemed biosolids as an organic waste that counted towards the amount of organic material landfilled and subject to the state's organics diversion requirements. CASA writes:

Therefore, it is important to identify and diversify end-use pathways for these materials. One pathway is to refine it into a nutrient-rich and highly regulated fertilizer material licensed by CDFA. Expanding the procurement eligibility to these materials would benefit public agencies that choose to seek this higher classification for their materials and would allow procurement entities more opportunities to meet their procurement targets by utilizing these locally-sourced and sustainable resources.

This bill broadens the types of materials that local jurisdictions may use to meet the state's ambitious procurement targets to include "beneficial agricultural amendments" if specified conditions are met.

Californians Against Waste and a coalition of organizations have an oppose-unless-amended position on the bill. While amendments taken in the Assembly Natural Resources Committee address most of the coalition's concerns, the organizations are requesting an amendment to ensure that only the food portion of co-processed food and biosolids end products count towards procurement, and that biosolids-derived portions remain ineligible. The coalition argues that the procurement program was designed to create markets for newly diverted SB 1383 materials (like food scraps and yard waste), and that by contrast, biosolids have been diverted through wastewater treatment systems for decades and are often composted or land-applied across the state.

Analysis Prepared by: Nikita Koraddi / APPR. / (916) 319-2081