

NEWS RELEASE

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Governor Signs Biomass Legislation Co-Sponsored by Pioneer Community Energy

(Rocklin, California) – Governor Gavin Newsome signed AB 843, a bill co-sponsored by Pioneer Community Energy that opens funding opportunities for bioenergy facilities that use biogas and sustainable forest waste as fuel sources.

Before AB 843 became law, only investor-owned utilities like PG&E could use funding available through the Bioenergy Market Adjusting Tariff program to purchase energy from smaller biomass and biogas facilities. Now, because of the legislation, Community Choice Aggregators (CCAs) like Pioneer Community Energy, which are formed so local governments can purchase energy on behalf of their constituents, have access to the bioenergy program.

“CCA’s are closer to their communities and are best equipped to make decisions on greening the energy grid,” said Assemblymember Cecilia Aguiar-Curry (D-Winters), the bill’s author. “The investor-owned utilities have left these green energy funds unused, while our CCA’s have aggressively pursued such opportunities.”

Bioenergy plants process waste products such as biogas from dairy and wastewater treatment plants, and biomass from sustainably managed forests in high fire-threat districts to generate energy. Strategically placed biomass facilities help prevent wildfires and improve the watershed. Biomass also offers a cleaner and more productive alternative to slash burning, which can cause wildfires.

Sam Kang, Pioneer’s Chief Operating Officer, who acted as a primary technical witness for AB 843, says biomass provides another tool that communities in the Sierra Nevada region can use to prevent devastating wildfires.

“California communities, especially in the foothills, are trying to combat the threat of fire by reducing the forest fuel load,” he says. “A biomass plant provides a place to effectively dispose of that wood waste while providing grid resiliency as a 24/7 renewable resource.”

With the passage of AB 843, Pioneer can now work with local communities and agencies interested in constructing biomass facilities and execute long-term power purchase agreements with local biomass projects while maintaining its commitment to competitive rates.

“Pioneer strives to purchase locally generated electricity to support the communities we serve,” said Jim Holmes, Placer County’s District 3 Supervisor and member of the Pioneer Community Energy Board. “Purchasing power from a local biomass facility fits that priority.”

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ABOUT PIONEER COMMUNITY ENERGY

Pioneer is a community-owned, not-for-profit agency serving unincorporated Placer and El Dorado County and the incorporated areas of Auburn, Colfax, Lincoln, Placerville, Rocklin and the Town of Loomis. Pioneer serves more than 150,000 residential and commercial customers. Pioneer is a local not-for-profit provider of electricity — we power the communities we serve with competitive rates, reliable service and a choice in energy options. To learn more, visit pioneercommunityenergy.org.