

Dane County Exec. Parisi: Dane County landfill gas project to enhance lake clean-up work and generate more renewable energy

Posted on Friday, Nov 17, 2017

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Today, County Executive Joe Parisi announced garbage brought to the Dane County landfill and manure made by cows could soon be used to fuel thousands of vehicles across the region and country. The county's 2018 budget includes the final phase of funding totaling \$23.5 million for Dane County to build a biogas processing facility at its landfill and connect it with an adjacent interstate pipeline. These new dollars will pay for construction of a gas off-loading station where other biogas producers, like dairy digesters located in the North Mendota watershed, can bring their cleaned up fuel and have it injected into the pipeline.

"Taking cow manure and garbage and turning it into vehicle fuel is good for the air we breathe, the waters we fish and swim in, and county taxpayers," Parisi said. "Dane County is committed to accelerating work to clean up our lakes and financing efforts to produce renewable energy, and this project does both." Design work of the new facility is nearing completion and construction is expected to begin early next year with the system online by spring of 2019.

The Dane County landfill currently generates electricity with the gas collected from the breakdown of garbage and organic material. Presently, the landfill makes enough electricity to power 4,500 homes. By converting this gas into vehicle fuel, the county can eliminate thousands of tons of carbon emissions, a leading cause to

the extreme weather events triggered by climate change. In addition to the project's environmental benefits, it is estimated the county will generate enough revenue from the project to payback its \$25 million cost of the project in just a few years. That creates economic opportunity for both Dane County taxpayers and owners of "Cow Power" facilities north of Lake Mendota to convert their operations to gas production.

The 2018 county budget slated for final review and approval next week also includes a \$200,000 study to look into where additional digesters could be located to process manure into biogas. This will keep more of it off the land, reducing phosphorus on fields prone to runoff during heavy rain events that can get into waterways and cause algae blooms.

"Dane County continues to find game changing solutions to protect our lakes, produce renewable energy, and reduce climate change emissions," said CEO of Clean Fuel Partners John Haeckel, whose company purchased the community digester near Waunakee in late 2015. "Our innovative private-public partnership with family-owned dairy farms will continue the work to economically remove phosphorus from the watershed."

With \$5.5 million in new funds in the county budget, the county will build an offloading site that will enable gas to be brought in from three privately owned digesters in the county. The gas would first need to be purified and compressed by the owner's equipment before being hauled to the landfill for injection into the interstate pipeline.

Digesters reduce greenhouse gas emissions by collecting and destroying methane that would otherwise be emitted to the atmosphere. They also help farms manage manure more responsibly, which reduces harmful runoff to lakes and streams. The county's new facility at the landfill will make it economically feasible for manure digesters in the county to continue to produce renewable energy, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and clean up our lakes.