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## CalCAN's Renewable Energy Bill Clears the Assembly!

On August 29, the Renewable Energy Equity Act (SB 489), authored by Senator Lois Wolk and sponsored by CalCAN, cleared the state Assembly with a strong and bipartisan vote of 59-to-18.

SB 489 allows all qualified renewable energy types to participate in the Net Energy Metering Program, including biomass produced from agricultural waste products. It will help the state reach its renewable energy and greenhouse gas emissions goals while spurring economic development and providing farmers and food processors with new opportunities to save on their electricity bills and contribute to the green economy.

KQED's Climate Watch program recently did a short [radio story on SB 489](#) that is worth listening to.

SB 489 is next heard in the Senate for consideration of some technical changes that were made since they passed it in June, and then it moves to the desk of Governor Brown for consideration. Hopefully we'll soon ask you to make a call to his office!

## CalCAN Seeking a Campaign Director

Please circulate this job announcement widely and help us expand the CalCAN team! We are looking for an experienced campaign organizer to launch a new initiative to develop a network of public health, environmental and local food organizations in urban districts that support CalCAN's mission

and policy objectives.

For a complete job announcement and instructions for applying, see the [CalCAN website](#).

### **New CDFA Environmental Panel**

CDFA Secretary Karen Ross recently announced new appointments to a CDFA advisory group, the [Cannella Environmental Farming Act Science Panel](#). The panel is charged with reviewing agriculture's impacts on the environment and creating a voluntary environmental farming program to provide incentives to farmers and ranchers whose conservation practices provide environmental benefits, including improved air and water quality and enhanced wildlife habitat.



At CalCAN, we are pleased not only that Secretary Ross has made it a priority to breathe life into the panel, which was established in law in the mid-1990s, but that she populated it with several knowledgeable and experienced members.

Three of the panel members have served in various advisory capacities with CalCAN: Ann Thrupp, PhD, is the Manager of Sustainability and Organic Development at Fetzer & Bonterra Vineyards; Brian Leahy from the Resources Agency, Department of Conservation; Louise Jackson, PhD, University of California Cooperative Extension (ex officio member). We look forward to supporting these and the other committee members in their efforts, and we commend Secretary Ross for devoting resources to the panel and its important work.



### **Sustainable Ag Input on Cap-and-Trade Rules**

In mid-August, CalCAN and five of its partners submitted [written comments](#) to the California Air Resources Board (CARB) and CalCAN provided verbal testimony on aspects of the proposed design of California's cap-and-trade program.

CalCAN is concerned about the design and implementation of two elements of the program. First, to ensure that the cap and trade program in California includes high quality offset credits that meet the AB 32 goals of GHG emissions reductions, CARB must grapple with the complex and dynamic nature of diverse farming systems, avoid unintended negative incentives, seek to level the playing field for small and mid-scale producers and support innovative, conservation oriented California-based projects.

Second, CalCAN urges CARB to include in its recommendations to the legislature competitive grants for research, technical assistance and financial incentives for agricultural practices that reduce GHG emissions and sequester atmospheric carbon while providing environmental and health cobenefits.

### CalCAN Blog Highlights

CalCAN [blogs](#) regularly about science, policies and practices related to agriculture and climate change. Here is a sample of recent pieces.

[Agricultural Soils and Climate Change](#) - Explores the issues surrounding a new study suggesting that agricultural soils may emit higher concentrations of potent greenhouse gases in a future CO<sub>2</sub>-rich atmosphere.

[What's Up with Rising Food Prices?](#) - According to a recent report by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) global food prices have risen 37% from mid-2010. Studies are showing that an important contributor to high food prices is climate change.

[Lessons Learned from California's Most Recent Drought](#) - Two

reports released in June, one from the Pacific Institute and one from the California Roundtable on Water and Food Supply, offer valuable insights and recommendations on how to reduce vulnerability and increase resiliency in the event of future droughts.

We also have a [Facebook page](#) - please check it out!

### Farm Bill Listening Sessions at CDFA

CDFA Secretary Ross is seeking input from farmers, ranchers and other stakeholders prior to formal consideration by Congress of the 2012 Farm Bill. The listening sessions will inform CDFA's priorities on farm bill programs.

There are several important sustainable agriculture programs of the Farm Bill that must be protected and strengthened. These include a number of organic and conservation programs that have climate and other environmental benefits: Conservation Stewardship Program; Environmental Quality Incentives Program; Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program; National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service (ATTRA); Organic Transitions Integrated Research Program; and others.



Two sessions have been held in Sacramento and Fresno, and the following sessions are coming up:

September 7, 2011 - San Diego, 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. San Diego County Farm Bureau 1670 E. Valley Parkway, Escondido, CA 92027

September 8, 2011 - Salinas, 3:00 - 5:00 p.m. Monterey County Agricultural Commissioners' Office 1428 Abbott Street, Salinas, CA 93901

If you cannot attend in person, comments can be emailed to [farmbill@cdfa.ca.gov](mailto:farmbill@cdfa.ca.gov) or mailed to California Department of Food and Agriculture, 1220 N Street, Suite 400, Sacramento,

CA 95814.

## Can Organics Feed the World?



A question that continues to be much debated in agriculture came up during a recently aired panel of the Commonwealth Club. Listen [here](#) to how the question was answered by CalCAN's Policy

Director Jeanne Merrill as well as representatives of the California Farm Bureau and Western United Dairymen.

## Raising Organic Family Farms

The Ecological Farming Association, a CalCAN partner, is proud to support Raising Organic Family Farms, a new initiative from Lundberg Family Farms to help nurture, grow and redefine a new generation of organic family farmers.

Raising Organic Family Farms will provide up to \$50,000 in grants and scholarships in 2011 for beginning or transitioning organic farmers - from college students interested in sustainable agriculture programs to beginning farmers in need of seed money. Applications and nominations are due October 31, 2011, and more information is available at the [Lundberg website](#).

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