

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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## **IT'S A GAS: LANDFILLS AND ORGANIC WASTE**

Flares, fans, and collection wells are all components of a landfill's gas collection system. Why does a landfill need a gas collection system you may wonder? The simple answer is that landfills produce methane gas. To avoid fires or explosions, this gas needs to be collected and removed from the landfill. You may also wonder how landfills produce methane. The most common way is by burying organic waste, which decomposes under the soil and creates methane gas in this oxygen deficient environment. If you read our previous article in this series, you would know that lots of wastes that go into landfills are organic waste and that landfills are the third largest producer of methane.

As more organic waste is buried in the landfill, even more methane is produced and more parts of the gas collection system need to be added, which could lead to higher tipping fees the public must pay to fund these upgrades. By reducing the amount of organic waste buried we can reduce the amount of methane getting into our environment. This is the reasoning behind California Senate Bill 1383 Short Lived Climate Pollutants (SLCP): Organic Waste Reductions, which was signed into law in 2016. The regulations will be adopted beginning January 1, 2022, with the goals of reducing organic waste sent to landfills by 75 percent and rescuing 20 percent of the edible food that is currently landfilled by 2025. There are several steps we can take now to prepare.

Methane gas is a much more potent greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide. Luckily, it is not as prevalent as carbon dioxide. When methane gas is released in the environment, it can trap heat much more effectively than carbon dioxide; however, it does not last as long in the atmosphere as carbon dioxide. As a significant portion of methane is produced at landfills, there are direct ways to prevent this methane from being produced. Reducing the organic waste sent to landfills is a major way to reduce methane emissions. Reducing organic waste can be anything from practicing backyard composting to changing the ways you buy and prepare food. Look for more articles in this series on ways to reduce your organic waste sent to landfills and how to set up your own backyard compost bin.

To learn more about diverting organic material away from landfills and the benefits of reducing methane emissions please contact the Tehama County Solid Waste Management Agency at (530) 528-1103 or visit our website [www.TehamaCountyLandfill.com](http://www.TehamaCountyLandfill.com). If you would like to learn more about what is happening in other parts of California to address methane emissions, please visit CalRecycle's webpage here: <https://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/climate/>.