

UTILITY WORKERS UNION OF AMERICA

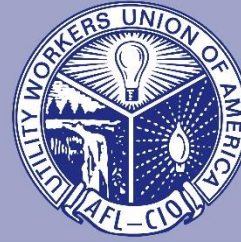
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April 13, 2022

The Honorable Ben Hueso, Chair
California State Senate Committee on Energy
State Capitol Building
Sacramento CA 95814

Dear Senator Hueso:

Our union, the Utility Workers Union of America (UWUA), representing around 45,000 workers nationally in the electric, gas and water utility sectors, writes today to support SB 1109 regarding changes to California's RPS program for bioenergy projects. We view this bill as a modest but important policy signal to ensure the state is best able to harness California's biomass electricity generating infrastructure for the long-term health and safety of both its natural resources and citizens. This bill would help to ensure that biomass energy facilities can continue to serve as an integral piece of the state's management of wood and agricultural waste while helping to meet California's climate goals and clean energy needs in a responsible, sustainable manner.

Based on the lived experience of our members in California, particularly in the water utility sector during the state's wildfire crisis last year, we support SB 1109's requirement that an additional 100 megawatts of biomass power be brought onto the grid. As millions of tons of material are brought out of the forest as a tool for preventing and managing future crises of this nature, bioenergy facilities are the best near-term option to manage these organic energy supplies to avoid the waste and emissions associated with open burning and the fire risk associated with unmitigated fuel accumulation in the forest.

As a renewable, baseload electric power source, biomass provides reliable energy regardless of variable conditions in the weather. Biomass energy facilities are a valuable tool for ensuring that the state can meet both grid reliability and public health and safety goals through lowering fire risk while providing steady, affordable power to Californians. In that respect, SB 1109 would help the state reap the benefit of both forest health and wildfire safety by more fully realizing the potential of biomass energy production.

Developing a clear approach to biomass energy now will allow California to develop a long-term, sustainable solution for biomass management for the future. SB 1109 would be an important first step in solving the issues of energy, safety, and natural resource management facing California today.

For all of these reasons, we support SB 1109 and urge its swift passage.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "James T. Slevin".

James T. Slevin
National President
Utility Workers Union of America, AFL-CIO