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Portland, Oregon Renewable Energy Facility to Set a
U.S. Standard for Recycling of Food Waste
Columbia Biogas to convert food waste to energy

Portland, Ore.—Columbia Biogas plans to begin construction in the summer of 2011 on a renewable energy facility in Northeast Portland. The facility will convert food waste into renewable energy and fertilizer products.

The company will recycle food waste from commercial and industrial sources such as grocery stores, restaurants and food and beverage processors in the Portland metropolitan region. Metro, the regional government responsible for the solid waste system, reports that 247,000 tons of food waste from the region are disposed of annually and the City of Portland estimates that 30 percent of the commercial and residential waste stream is food. Through a process of anaerobic digestion in a controlled and enclosed plant, organic matter will be broken down in the absence of oxygen and produce methane-rich biogas.

Columbia Biogas expects to generate biogas with the potential to produce approximately five megawatts of power which is equivalent to the electricity requirements of 5,000 homes. The digestion process also produces byproducts that can be used as fertilizer and nutrient-rich soil amendments in nurseries and farms.

“The Columbia Biogas facility will greatly benefit efforts by the City of Portland to increase food waste recovery, meet our solid waste management goals and decrease greenhouse gas emissions,” said Portland Mayor Sam Adams. “We’re proud to have this world-class facility locating operations right in the city of Portland. This is just the kind of business we want to support our position as a national leader in sustainability.”

A local anaerobic digestion facility helps to lower greenhouse gas emissions by significantly reducing the long distance hauling required for transporting food waste to remote landfills. In addition, methane released from the decomposition of food waste in landfills has over 20 times the greenhouse gas impact of carbon dioxide.

“Columbia Biogas brings an excellent model for how to handle food waste throughout the region,” said Metro Councilor Rex Burkholder, whose district includes the new facility. “By eliminating the need to truck waste to landfills, we’ll reduce greenhouse gases. Through this process we can power our homes and fertilize our farm fields with food waste instead of burying it. In addition, by partnering with the community, we’ll create and maintain good paying jobs for people in their neighborhoods.”

Currently there are more than 5,000 commercial, industrial and agriculture biogas plants successfully operating worldwide. The number of new installations has grown exponentially in recent years due to the efficiency and reliability of modern biogas designs. The Columbia Biogas team includes a leading European biogas engineering firm, allowing the project to draw upon the extensive knowledge, experience and technology which exists in Europe.

“We’ve assembled top talent from Portland and the biogas industry for this project that we believe will set a standard in the United States for anaerobic digestion of commercially-generated food waste,” said John McKinney, Columbia Biogas principal and founder. “This biogas facility will be the first of its kind in the Northwest and will be one of the leading facilities in the world in terms of processing capabilities and technology.”

The facility will be located in Northeast Portland at 6849 NE Columbia Boulevard near I-205 and I-5 in an industrial zoned area, which provides convenient access for the delivery of food waste. Permits for the facility have been approved by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and Metro, the regional government for the three-county Portland metropolitan area. Columbia Biogas team members are working with neighborhood residents, organizations and businesses to support issues of importance such as Columbia Slough revitalization, local jobs and green space project opportunities.

About Columbia Biogas

Columbia Biogas is an innovative clean energy company focused on the development of a biogas facility in Portland, Oregon, that will convert local food waste into renewable energy, fertilizer and nutrient-rich soil amendments. The Columbia Biogas team has significant experience in project development and project financing of utility scale renewable energy facilities as well as a long history in the design and operations of wastewater treatment facilities incorporating anaerobic digestion. For more information, please visit www.columbiabiogas.com.

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