

AVOIDING AN AFFORDABILITY CRISIS

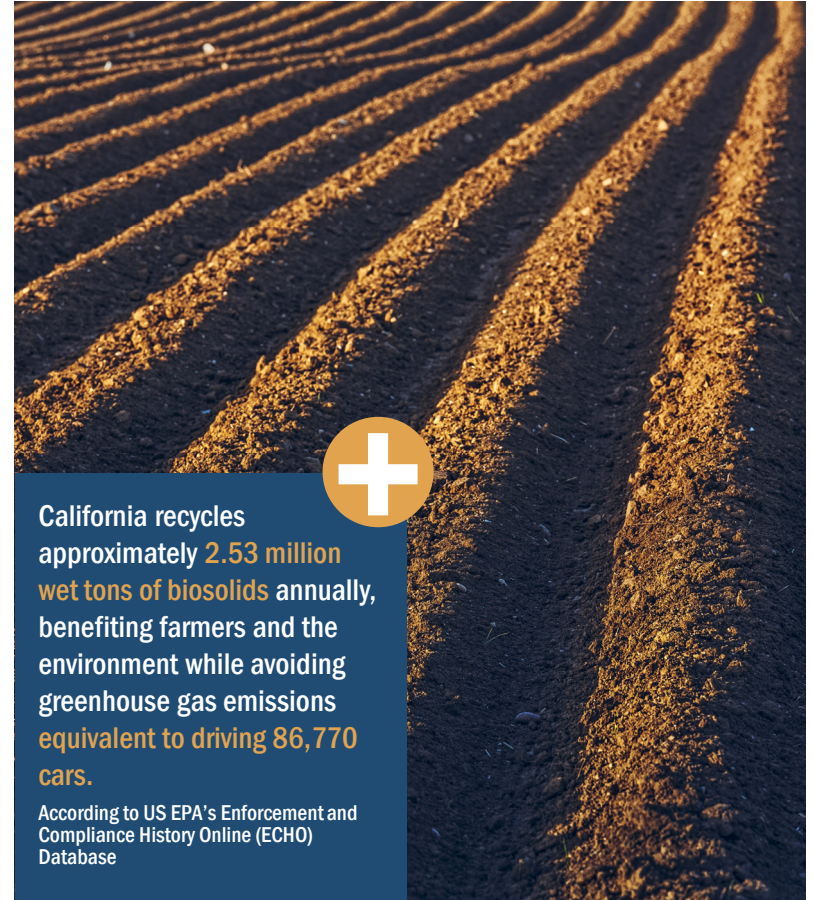
A Practical Guide for Biosolids Management in California





Decades Supporting Farmers and a Sustainable Future

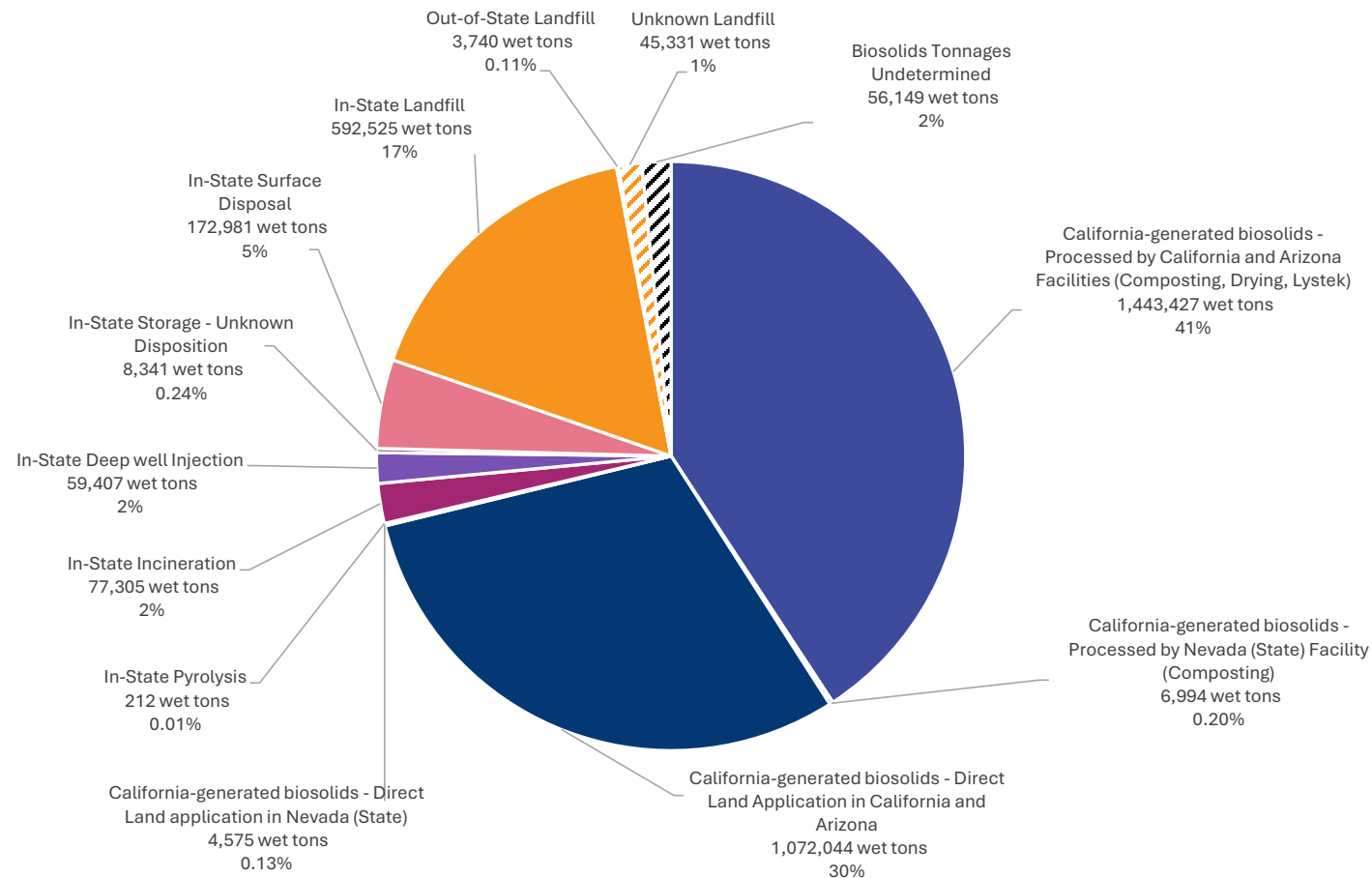
- + Biosolids are nutrient-rich material produced during wastewater treatment
- + When returned to the soil, this valuable resource improves soil health, retains water, and recycles nutrients
- + Recycling of biosolids reduces the use of fossil fuels and synthetic chemicals in agriculture



California recycles approximately **2.53 million wet tons of biosolids** annually, benefiting farmers and the environment while avoiding greenhouse gas emissions **equivalent to driving 86,770 cars.**

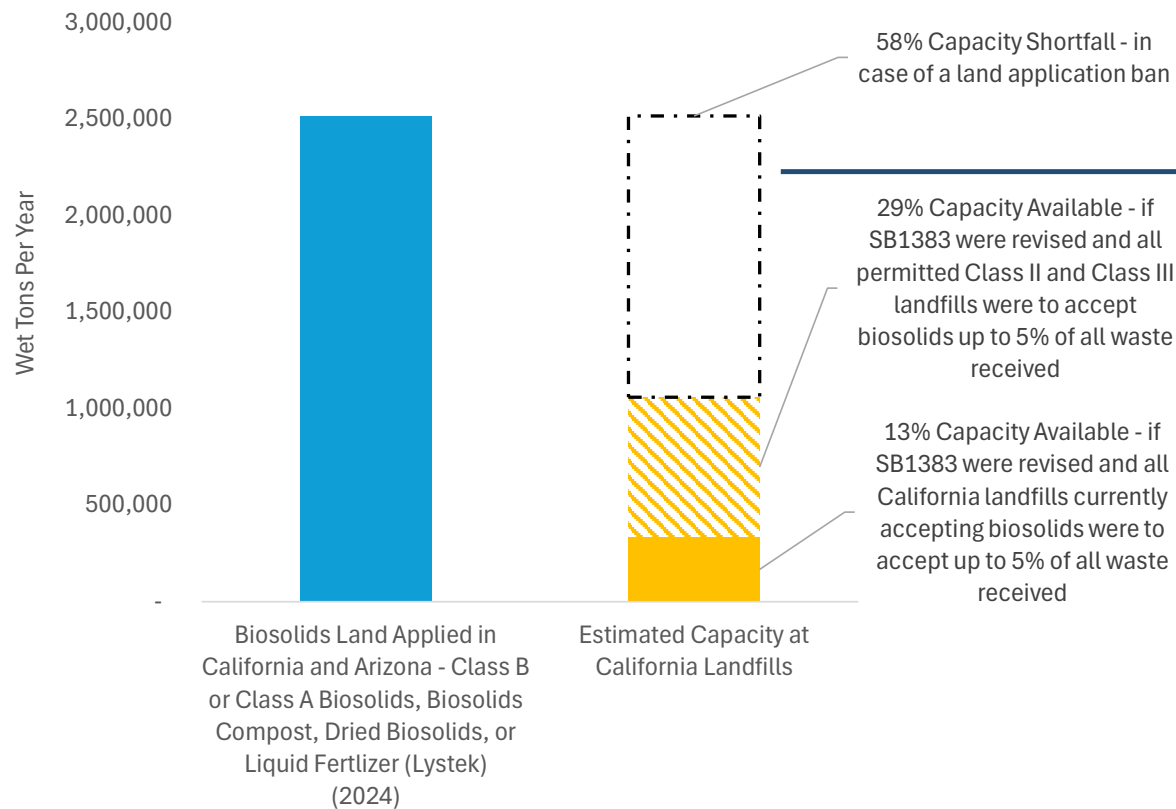
According to US EPA's Enforcement and Compliance History Online (ECHO) Database

Distribution of Biosolids Generated in California





Landfills are not a Long-term Solution



A ban on land application of biosolids would leave **1.45 Million tons** of biosolids with **nowhere to go in California**

Note: See Brown and Caldwell/Carollo 2026 California Biosolids Capacity Analysis Study



Environmental Consequences

- + Sending biosolids to landfills increases carbon emissions and conflicts with the state's climate goals (SB 1383)
- + A ban or severe restriction on land application would force 2.5 million wet tons of biosolids to be trucked to California landfills or out of state
- + A ban in California could create a regional ripple effect in Arizona and Nevada. Arizona is already considering biosolids restrictions/legislation.



A ban on land application of biosolids would increase greenhouse gas emissions by an estimated **174%**, which conflicts with California's SB 1383 goal of reducing organics disposal **by 75% by 2025** (organics include biosolids)—increasing methane-related climate impacts.

According to CalRecycle SB 1383 Short-Lived Climate Pollutant Reduction Strategy and Brown and Caldwell/Carollo's 2026 California Biosolids Capacity Analysis Study



Bans Risk Affordability for Ratepayers & Farmers

- + A ban or severe restriction on land application of biosolids would further strain utilities struggling to maintain affordable services for their customers
- + Additionally, a ban would drive up costs for the agricultural community, requiring farmers to buy manufacture fertilizer as a soil amendment
- + Fertilizer affordability is a growing national concern. Federal investment may refocus on USDA's Fertilizer Production Expansion Program (FPEP) to support **fertilizer and nutrient alternatives**, that includes recycled organics and new nutrient-management products.



Maine's land application ban caused costs to increase by **175% on average**

According to the Maine Water Environment Association





A Responsible Path Forward

California can continue to protect public health and the environment without sacrificing sustainability or affordability through the following:

- + **MAINTAIN PROTECTIVE POLICIES** Continue emphasizing source control and monitoring to reduce PFAS impacts prior to biosolids land application.
- + **MANAGE PFAS AT THE SOURCE** Continue and strengthen policies related to PFAS use in commercial products and industrial processes, and support pollution prevention programs.
- + **PROTECT FARMERS AND RATEPAYERS** Avoid policies that abruptly eliminate recycling and beneficial use and force utilities into high-cost landfill or out-of-state options. Help keep farmers in business and farmland in production through the higher yields and lower costs provided by biosolids.
- + **INVEST IN INNOVATION** Fund research, pilot projects, source-control programs, and technologies that reduce PFAS before biosolids are generated or beneficially used.
- + **SUPPORT CLIMATE GOALS AND REGIONAL BIOSOLIDS MANAGEMENT** Align biosolids policy with SB 1383, methane reduction and climate resiliency goals by preserving biosolids beneficial reuse options. Regulations should consider the impact to all stakeholders to avoid unintended consequences for California ratepayers and farmers.



For additional information on PFAS and Biosolids Management visit:

California Association of Sanitation Agencies

www.casaweb.org



Learn More