

# BUSINESS TIMES®

September 1-7, 2023

Proudly serving Santa Barbara, Ventura and San Luis Obispo counties

Vol. 24, No. 25



Agromin's Oxnard blending and manufacturing yard.

COURTESY PHOTO

## Agromin helps cities meet new climate rules

**By Mike Harris**  
Staff Writer

Oxnard-based Agromin, the state's largest organics recycler, is helping cities in the tri-county region comply with Senate Bill 1383, a climate pollution reduction act.

The law sets a goal of diverting 75% of organic waste from landfills — a major producer of greenhouse gases — by 2025 and requires jurisdictions to procure recovered organic material such as mulch and compost for their own use or to give away.

Agromin CEO Bill Camarillo told the Business Times on Aug. 28 that it's important for people to understand why the state mandated SB 1383, which was signed into law in 2016 and implemented on Jan. 1, 2022.

"It wasn't because they wanted to recycle more organic waste," he said. "It's because of the amount of emissions that are still emitted from landfills — methane is 80 times more potent than CO<sub>2</sub>, and it's a greenhouse gas emission.

"So, it's really to reduce carbon emissions out of the atmosphere," he said.

Ventura announced on July 11 that, in partnership with Agromin, its Environmental Sustainability Division had launched a free compost and mulch giveaway program for residents aimed at supporting the city's state requirements for organics recycling.

The program, the first of its kind in the state, aligns with SB 1383, the city said.

Arriana Rabago, environmental services specialist for the city's public works department, said the city "thought a great way to help meet our (SB 1383) requirements and directly give back to our community would be by offering them free compost and mulch" to use for gardening and landscaping.

Residents can pick up small amounts of compost for free at the city's Cornucopia Community Gardens from sunrise to sunset.

Larger amounts of compost or mulch can be picked up, also at no cost, directly from Agromin using an online portal.

Residents can place up to two orders per household per year with Agromin.

The company can deliver the materials to addresses with Ventura Zip Codes for \$135 per order, according to the city.

Ventura's agreement with Agromin is for three years.

Camarillo said in a press release that Agromin compiles ordering tracking data and provides regular reports to the city, which in turn, can report the data to the state.

Ventura Mayor Joe Schroeder said in the release that partnering with Agromin "enables the city to meet its state requirements while allowing residents to access

quality compost and mulch.

"We encourage everyone to take advantage of this leading program and help us make Ventura a more sustainable and resilient city," he said.

Carpinteria stays in compliance with SB 1383 through a franchise agreement with its waste hauler, E.J. Harrison and Sons, which partners with Agromin, said Erin Maker, the city's environmental program manager, sustainability division.

The bill requires all sectors to work with their waste hauler to divert organic materials from landfills, which in turn get converted into compost and mulch, she said.

Part of Carpinteria's agreement with E.J. Harrison and Sons is for the waste hauler to help the city meet its SB 1383 targets.

"We get a certain amount of compost and mulch through our agreement with E.J. Harrison and Sons, which gets it through Agromin," Maker said.

For now, the materials are used for various city projects such as landscaping and the creation of a playground.

In the future, the city could potentially create a program similar to Ventura's, she said.

"I think there will continue to be challenges in implementation of SB 1383 just because it's new and there's a learning curve," Maker said.

Thus, one of the city's goals is to continue working closely with businesses and residents to make sure they understand the bill's requirements and are properly disposing of their materials, she said.

Atascadero contracted with Agromin for one year in 2022 to procure compost on the city's behalf so it could comply with SB 1383, said city Public Works Analyst Ryan Betz.

The city is now in full compliance, he said.

The San Luis Obispo County Integrated Waste Management Authority, a joint powers authority, has since succeeded Agromin to help Atascadero and the rest of the county's cities remain in accordance with the bill, Betz said.

"They've taken over the procurement of organic compost on behalf of the city," he said. "They weren't doing it at the time, and that's why we contracted with Agromin to do it."

Atascadero, in partnership with the authority, is working with its waste hauler, Waste Management, to provide programs for residents and businesses to comply with the bill's requirements.

Meanwhile, Agromin announced on Aug. 21 that it had received approval from the Merced County Board of Supervisors in April to operate and expand the Merced Highway 59 landfill composting operation.

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