

INSIGHT

Biogas: A Potential Revenue Stream

Biogas has been utilized within wastewater treatment plants for decades. However, the value of biogas and the environmental credits associated with biogas has risen exponentially in recent years.



For years many of our customers have been interested in being sustainable, but new resource recovery revenue streams and technological improvements are turning their 'green ambitions' into profitable solutions.

Jeremey Lay, wastewater treatment manager at Bartlett & West

Digesters and Typical Biogas Uses

Large municipal and industrial entities produce significant amounts of biogas as part of their wastewater treatment process. This biogas consists of roughly 50 to 75 percent methane—the main component of natural gas.

Historically this biogas is captured through anaerobic digesters and used to fuel boilers for the production of steam. Some larger municipalities use the captured biogas to fuel a generator to produce electricity to help run the treatment plant. However that use of biogas is typically only

about 45 percent efficient and is corrosive for the generator.

Now, technological advancements and the federal government's position on renewable fuels made biogas much more valuable than those historical uses.

Renewable Fuel Standard and RINs

The Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) was originally created to promote the development of renewable fuel markets such as corn ethanol and soy biodiesel. The RFS mandates that increasing percentages of the vehicle fuels used in the United States be from renewable sources. The RFS was modified in 2012 to include other biofuels such as biogas in order to spur additional biofuel growth.

These renewable fuels are given a renewable identification number (RIN), which are used to identify and track biofuel. Obligated parties under the RFS, such as big oil companies, have to purchase and blend in biofuel in order to comply with the mandate. Plus, state programs such as California's Low Carbon Fuel Standard have further increased the value of biogas.



Thanks to the firm's wastewater and biogas expertise, Bartlett & West's clients have access to:

- A potential revenue stream, which is particularly unique and attractive for clients as it provides an opportunity to have a self-funded source for infrastructure improvements.
- An environmentally-conscious waste treatment solution.
- And, a partner with understanding of everything from wastewater and biosolids treatment technology, to navigating biogas legislature and the revenue pipeline.