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Climate Report Provides Reminder of Biogas' Wide-Ranging Environmental Benefits

WASHINGTON, D.C.– Today, the American Biogas Council released the following statement in response to the fourth National Climate Assessment released Friday. The American Biogas Council is the trade association for the US biogas industry. Biogas systems recycle organic material like food and yard waste, sewage sludge and animal manure, producing renewable energy in addition to valuable soil products.

"The Climate Assessment's conclusions are alarming, and particularly the role that human actions and the way waste is managed plays in creating the crises we face. Building more biogas systems to recycle our organic waste into renewable energy and soil products is a critical near term action we can take to make a significant beneficial impact.

"In the US alone, each year we produce an enormous volume of organic residuals that must be better managed. The EPA found in 2014 that 258 million tons of municipal solid waste was generated, and that digestible organic materials such as waste paper, yard trimmings and food waste were the largest component. In addition to municipal solid waste, there are trillions of tons of industrial food and agricultural processing waste, municipal wastewater and animal manure. Building more biogas systems ensures we have the capacity to divert these materials from disposal, thus preventing harmful emissions.

"When we build more biogas systems, we can:

- recycle organic material that makes up a full third of our garbage—as much as glass, metal and plastic combined.
- produce baseload renewable energy in the form of electricity, heat or renewable natural gas
- produce valuable soil products to create healthy and drought resistant soils
- recycle the nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium so we don't need to use fossil fuels to produce synthetic fertilizers for our active agriculture industry
- prevent lagoon overflows due to hurricanes and flooding

"Use of biogas displaces fossil fuels for electricity and transportation, and the use of the natural soil amendments eliminates emissions from the production of fossil fuel-derived fertilizers. Biogas systems can also protect watersheds by reducing nutrient runoff and protect against drought by making soils healthy. Biogas that is upgraded and used as vehicle fuel has one of the lowest carbon intensities for all conventional and alternative renewable fuels, as validated by the California Air Resources Board.

"Today, we have 2,200 operating biogas systems, and we have the potential to build at least 14,000 more. Doing so would produce enough energy to power 7.5 million American homes and reduce emissions equivalent to removing up to 15.4 million passenger vehicles from the road. They would also catalyze an estimated $40 billion in capital deployment for construction activity, which would result in

approximately 335,000 short-term construction jobs and 23,000 permanent jobs to build and run the digesters.

“One of the most obvious actions we must take to protect our climate is recycling organics in the waste stream, and to do that, we need to policies that ensure the construction of more biogas systems.”

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About the American Biogas Council

The American Biogas Council is the only national trade association representing the entire biogas industry in the U.S. The ABC represents over 200 companies in all parts of the biogas supply chain who are dedicated to maximizing the production and use of biogas and digestate from organic waste. Find us online at www.AmericanBiogasCouncil.org, Twitter @ambiogascouncil, LinkedIn in the American Biogas Council group and on YouTube.