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Santa Cruz County To Sell Gas From Landfill To Generate Renewable Energy

FRAMINGHAM, MA– Santa Cruz County (CA) is a key partner in an innovative plan to produce “green” electricity from landfill gas. Ameresco, Inc. today announced agreements with Alameda Power & Telecom and the City of Palo Alto Utilities (CPAU) to purchase electricity generated by the company’s planned renewable energy power facility in Santa Cruz County. Ameresco will purchase landfill gas from the county’s solid waste disposal facility and use it to produce renewable energy. “Northern California and the nation are faced with the need to produce more domestic, alternative energy resources,” said Michael Bakas, Ameresco vice president. “Ameresco is proud to be in a long-term partnership with Santa Cruz County, Alameda Power & Telecom, and CPAU to bring this exciting renewable energy project to fruition.” The planned new facility, located at the county’s Buena Vista Landfill in Watsonville, will generate 3.2 megawatts of clean electricity – enough power for 3,000 average homes. Energy from the plant will be purchased equally by Alameda P&T and CPAU. Energy production will begin when construction of the project is completed in late 2005. “The Santa Cruz County Department of Public Works has been working many years to develop this renewable energy resource as part of our overall commitment to the preservation of natural resources through conscientious waste management practices,” said Patrick Mathews, Solid Waste and Recycling Services Manager, Santa Cruz County Public Works. “Beneficial use of the landfill methane derived from our community’s waste stream has been one of our highest resource conservation priorities and we are pleased to be working with such a committed partner as Ameresco.” Currently, the landfill gas – a by-product of the natural decomposition of trash – is burned using on-site flares. The new facility will capture the gas and use it as fuel to generate power for homes and businesses in the Alameda and Palo Alto areas. This multi-million dollar project will benefit the area’s economy by purchasing goods and services from local businesses. In addition, clean electricity from the new facility should help reduce the need for energy from traditional power plants fueled by fossil fuels. This would improve air quality by an amount equivalent to removing more than 27,000 cars from the highway – or preventing the use of 286,000 barrels of oil annually.

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