

# COMPOST 2026



## Changes to California Legislation SB 279

Presenter: John Heywood  
Session: California Updates  
Track: Concurrent Session 1D  
Date: February 3, 2026

# The Shared Reality

## SB 1383 PRESSURE



# System Stress

## Why Change Was Needed



- 01 Municipal Pressure**
- Compliance timelines
  - Contracting & siting constraints

- 02 Permitting Friction**
- Multi-agency approvals
  - Long development timelines

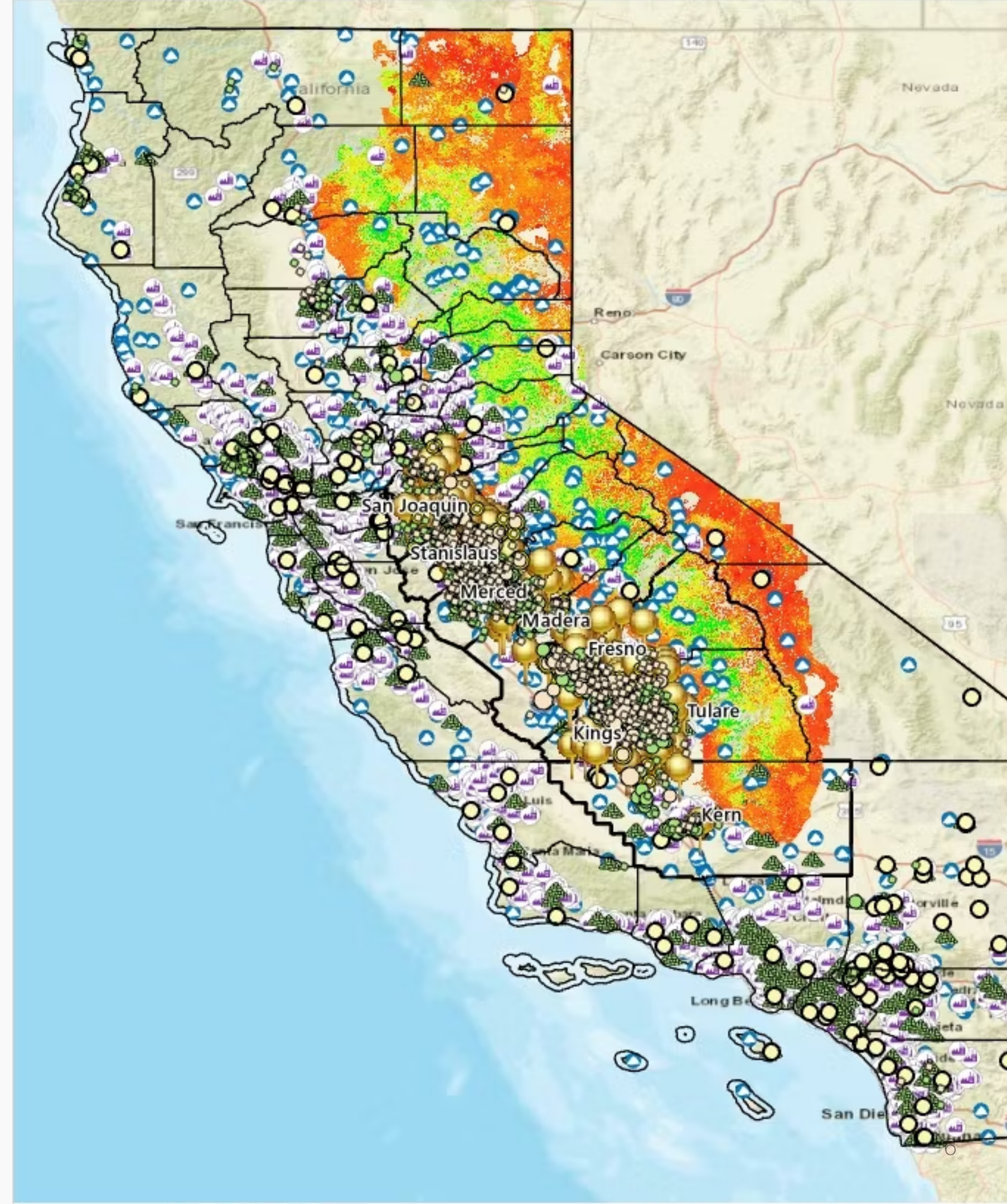
- 03 Spatial Mismatch**
- Capacity  $\neq$  proximity
  - High transport costs

# A Key Insight from the Data

We don't have a feedstock problem.

California generates over **82 million tons** of organic compostable material annually.

People, Food & Land Foundation maintains a California statewide dataset of organic feedstocks, mapping more than 65 million tons across agriculture, forestry, municipal, and food sectors.



# THE PARADOX

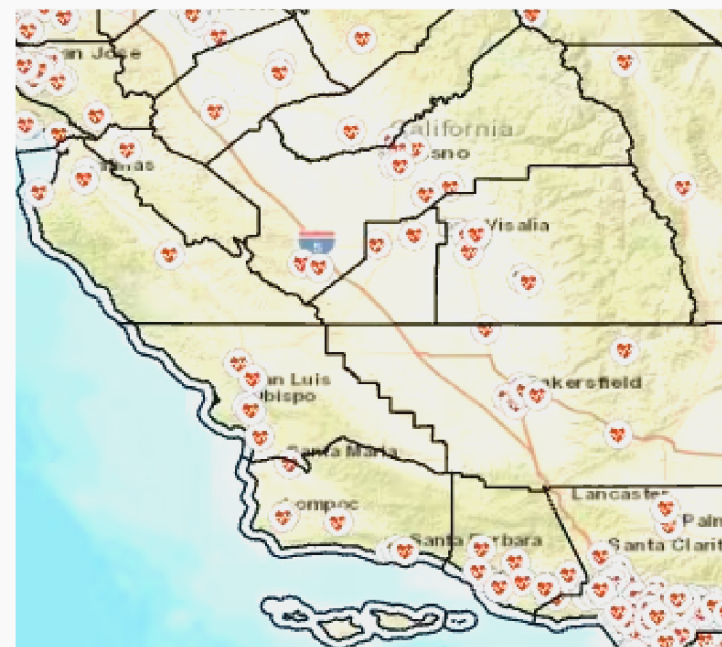
Mass vs. Conversation



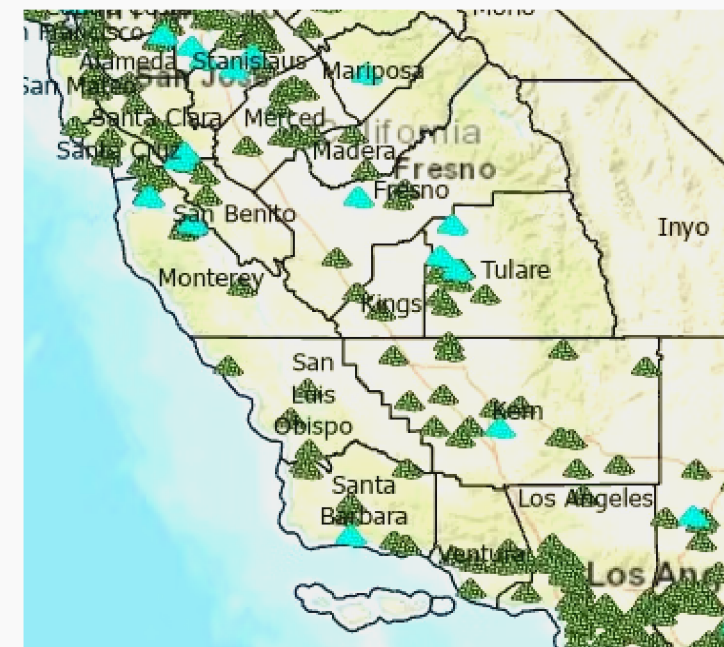
- *Conversations* focus on food waste  
(SB 1383 mandates)
- *Actual mass* is dominated by woody biomass + manures

# GEOGRAPHY MATTERS

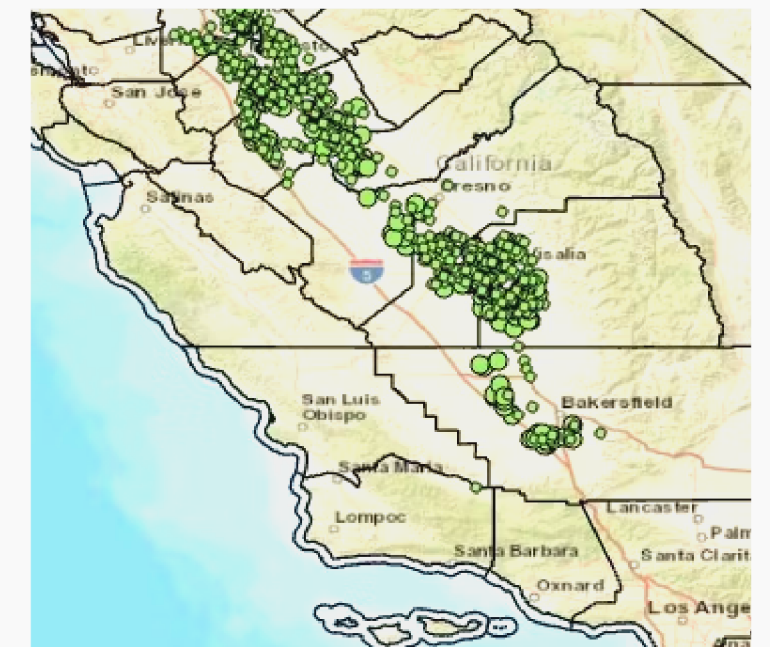
- Composting is geospatial
- Materials live in different places



Hospitals Food Waste



Composting Sites



Dairy Manures

# Enter SB 279

## LOW-FRICTION CAPACITY INCREASE

- Permit Exclusions Expanded
- Distributed Solutions
- Place-based Processing

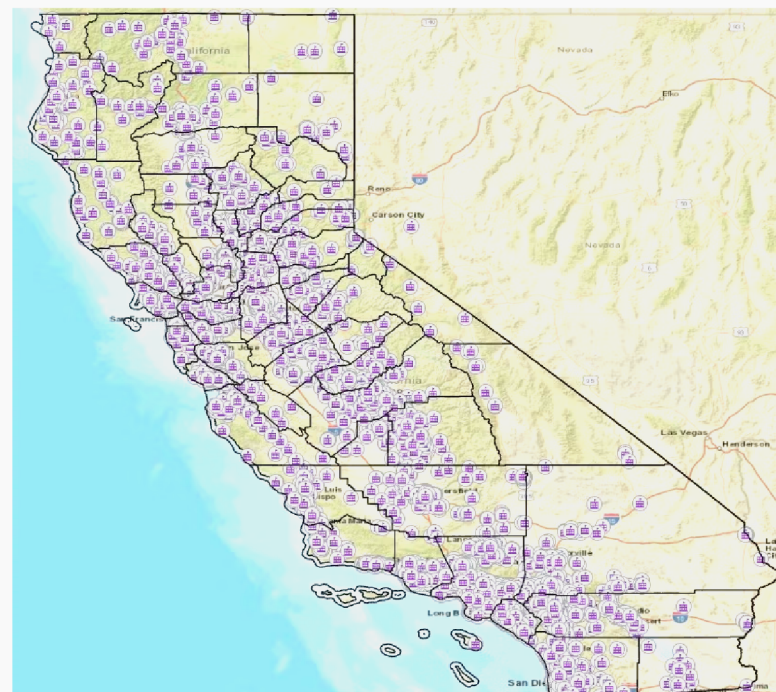
# COMMUNITY COMPOSTING EXPANSION

SB 279

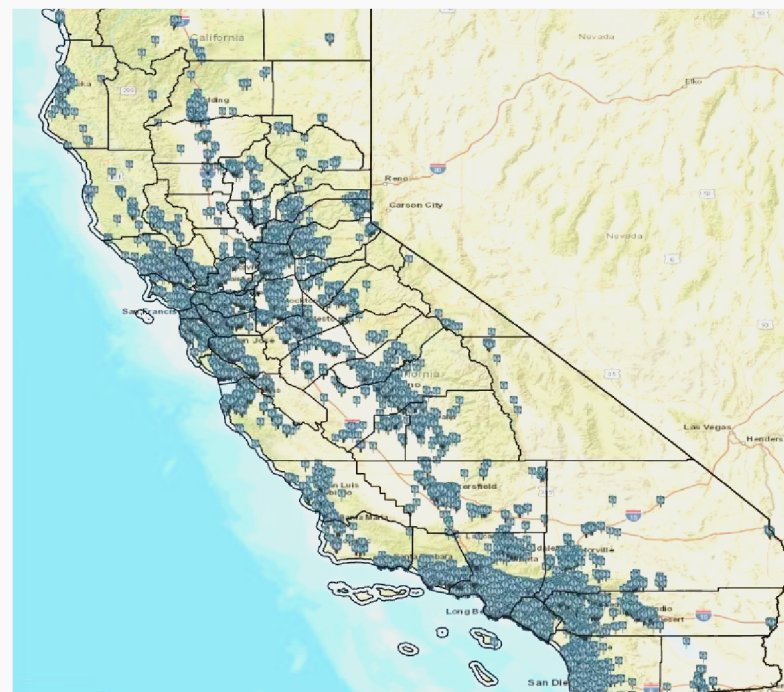


## SMALL EXCLUDED ACTIVITY

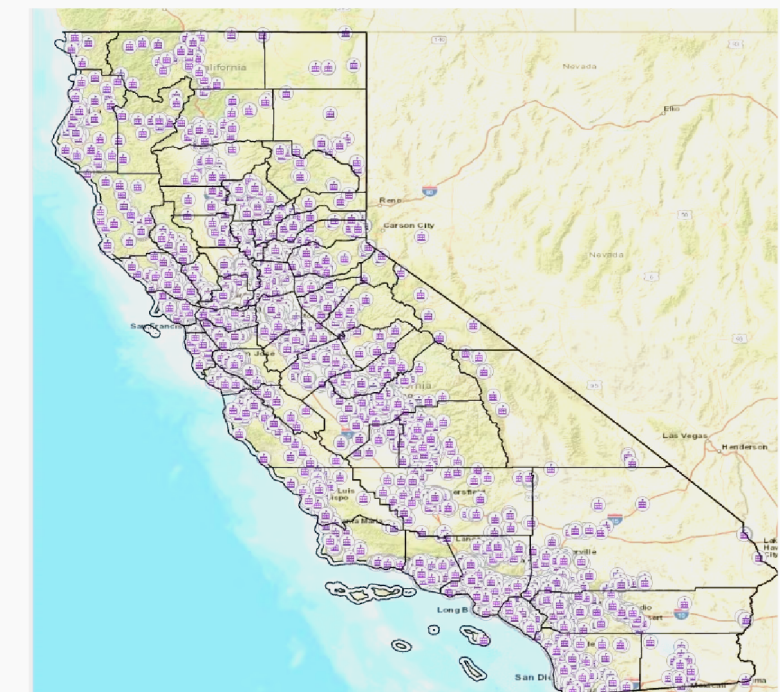
	Pre-SB 279	Post-SB 279
Small Production	≤ 100 cubic yards onsite	≤ 200 cubic yards onsite
State Agency Operators	≤ 100 cubic yards onsite	≤ 500 cubic yards onsite
Annual Limitations	≤ 1,000 cubic yards sold or given away	≤ 5,000 cubic yards sold or given away



EDUCATION



HOSPITALITY



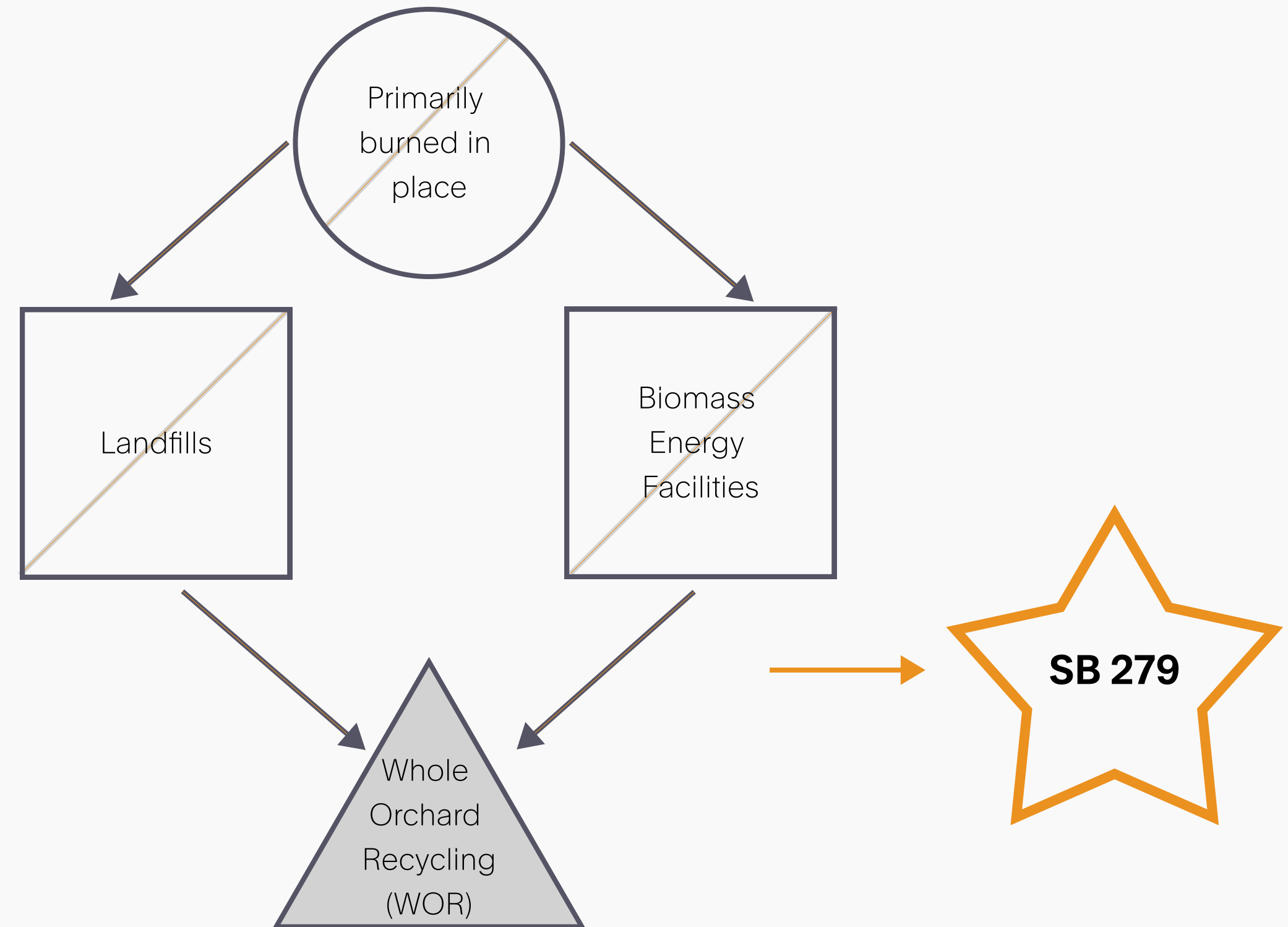
FOOD SERVICE

# AGRICULTURAL BIOMASS EVENTS

Pre-SB 279

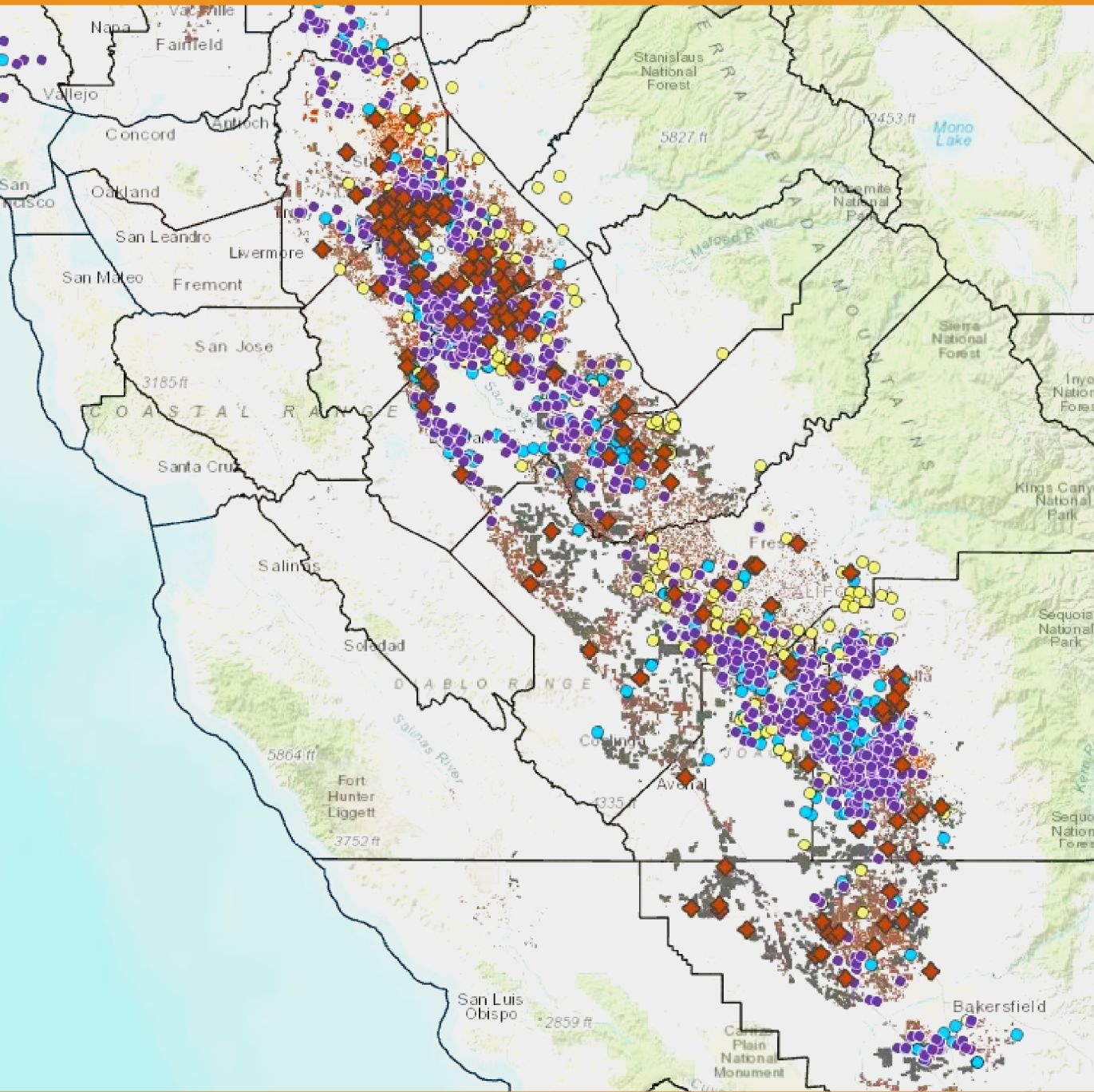


## LEGACY SOLUTIONS FOR WOODY BIOMASS



# AGRICULTURAL BIOMASS EVENTS

Post-SB 79



## PERMITTING EXCLUSION FOR AGRICULTURAL LARGE BIOMASS MANAGEMENT EVENTS (LBME)

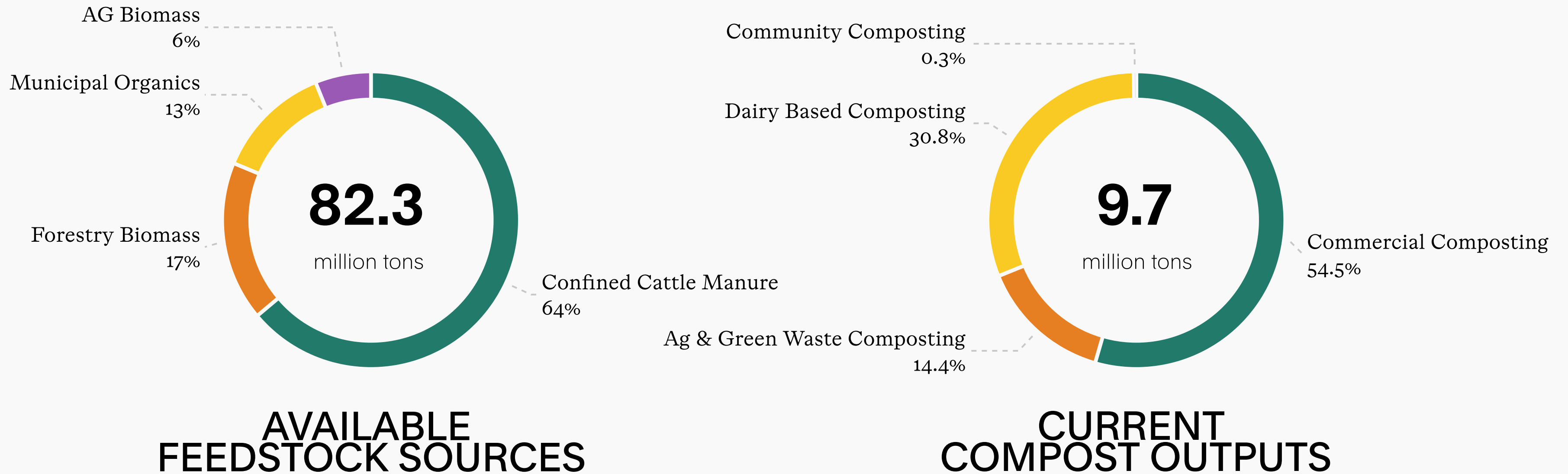
	Pre-SB 279 Production	Pre-SB 279 To Market	Post-SB 279 Production	Post-SB 279 To Market
Ag Composting (Non-LBME)	Limited to on-site materials	≤ 1,000 cubic yards sold or given away	Limited to on-site materials	≤ 5,000 cubic yards sold or given away
Ag Composting (LBME)	N/A	BioE Facilities WOR	LBME materials + other Ag materials	≤ 5,000 cubic yards sold or given away

**Episodic Event Window ≤ 24 months & once every 10 years per site**

- Place-based, episodic processing
- Allows addition of offsite Ag materials
- Wood + manure

# POTENTIAL vs. CURRENT CAPACITY

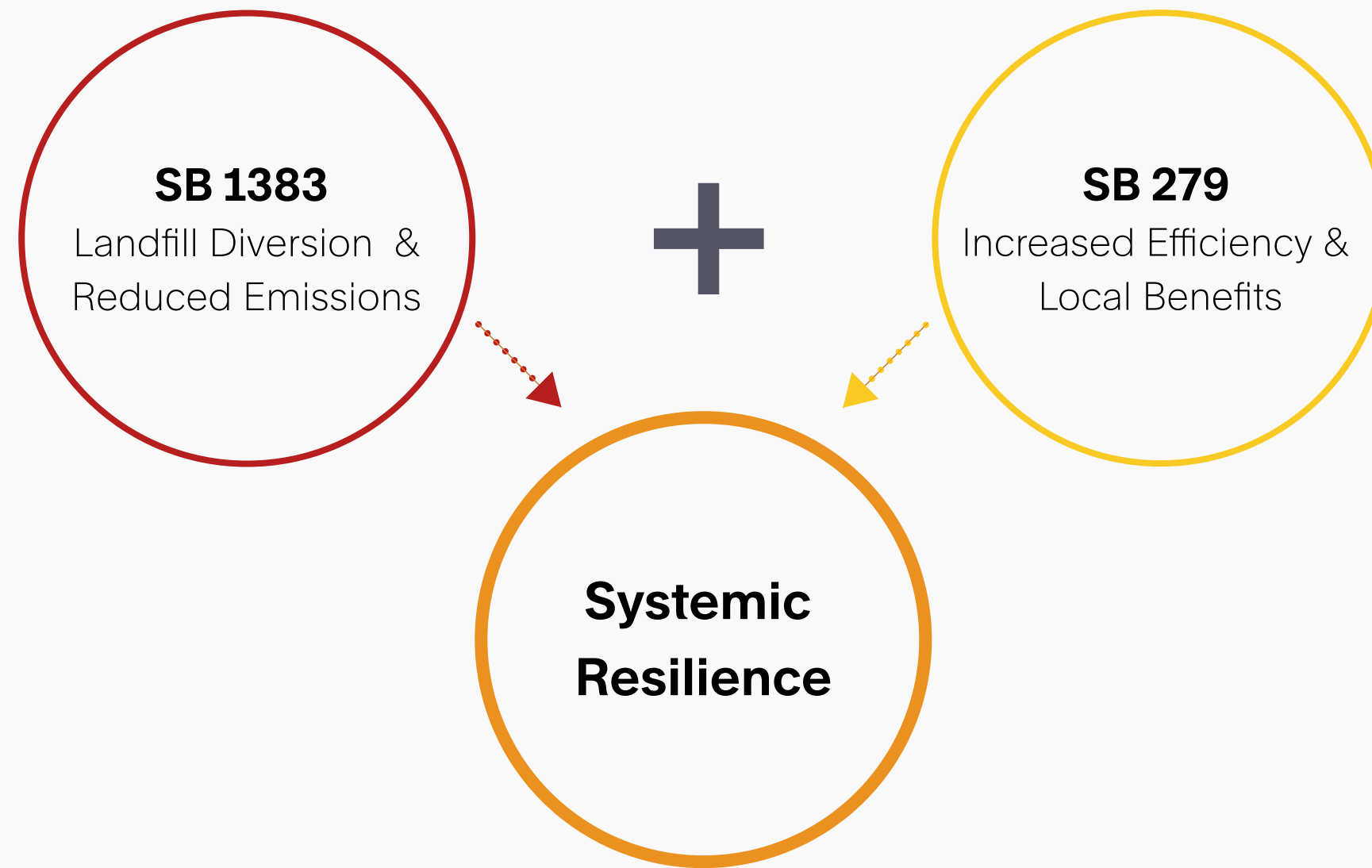
Future compost outputs could be increased to **33 million tons** annually with available feedstocks.



This three-fold difference in untapped composting potential calls for smarter planning, scaled infrastructure, and policy alignment.

# A BALANCED SYSTEM

Nutrients cycle back to soil, supporting land, water, crops, and communities.



Aligned with California's resilience framework:  
Nature-Based Solutions • Climate Adaptation • Biodiversity • Healthy Soils

# What's Next

## WORKING TOGETHER TO INCREASE COMMUNITY & ON-FARM COMPOSTING

A place-based pathway enabled by state policy



Recover

Organics

Compost

Locally

Return

Nutrients to Land

# Closing the Circle

Circular systems turn excess into renewal



Resource

From "Waste"



Nutrients

Return to Soil



Communities

Grow Resilient

# Thank You

To connect: [john@peoplefoodandland.org](mailto:john@peoplefoodandland.org)



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The screenshot shows the Compost University website. At the top, there are navigation links: HOME, COURSE CATALOG, and FACULTY DIRECTOR. Below this is a header with the Compost University logo (USCC, CREF, University) and the tagline "Learn here. Grow here. THRIVE here.™". The main content area features a navigation menu on the left with items like "About us", "Compost U™ in the News", "Course Catalog", "About Compost U™ Scholars", "Members Only", and "My Certifications". The main text describes Compost University as the only resource dedicated to technical education and certification for professionals in the composting and organic waste management industry. It mentions that users can access on-demand training to enhance skills and build their resumes. A note at the bottom states: "Note: Please allow for 1 business day for processing." There is also a partially visible section titled "To Receive Compost University..." and "Not a...".