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First-ever Use of Carbon Credits from Organic Composting to Offset Emissions

SEATTLE – Seattle City Light, a public utility serving 740,000 residents in Seattle, Wash., signed a contract with Portland-based nonprofit, The Climate Trust, to launch the first-ever national project to voluntarily purchase carbon credits sources from reductions made with organic composting. Seattle City Light purchased 35,000 carbon reduction tons (CRTs) of verified emission reductions from two organic material composting projects within the state, eliminating harmful methane emissions. The methane removal from these projects is equivalent to 6,200 cars being driven annually.

“Seattle City Light’s long-term goal is to meet all of Seattle’s electricity needs through conservation, new renewable sources, and with renewable energy credits to maintain zero net greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions,” said Corinne Grande, Seattle City Light Power Analyst from the Environmental Affairs Division.

The projects operated by Cedar Grove Composting prevent the emission of methane into the atmosphere. Methane has a global warming potential 23 times greater than carbon dioxide according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Typically, food and other organic materials are sent to a landfill, where organics decompose in an anaerobic manner, generating high levels of methane. Composting breaks down organics using an *aerobic* process, which results in substantially reduced methane emissions.

Cedar Grove Composting worked with Environmental Credit Corp (ECC); an experienced carbon offset project developer, to develop the projects in adherence to CAR’s new Organic Materials Project Protocol; managing the verification process, and structuring carbon credit transactions. The two projects are distinguished as the first projects quantified and verified under this new protocol, and also as some of the first carbon transactions involving organics composting domestically. The facilities accept material from a variety of residential and commercial sources including Seattle and King County, Wash. as well as other counties in the state.

In addition to the credits purchased by Seattle City Light, other environmental and economic benefits of the methane reduction project include the ability to utilize recycled food material as compost; improving soil health and structure; increasing drought resistance; and reducing the need for supplemental water, fertilizers, and pesticides.

“This project illustrates that investment in innovation such as organics composting projects can pave the way towards more sustainable methods of handling long-time problems like community waste, in addition to helping protect the climate,” said Derek Six, Portfolio Manager & CFO for Environmental Credit Corp.

Utilities such as Seattle City Light have relied on The Climate Trust (TCT) to finance and effectively manage numerous greenhouse gas reduction projects through TCT’s Oregon Program. “While The Climate Trust is well-versed in helping regulated utilities meet their compliance obligations, the heart and soul of our operations is in working with project developers such as ECC to achieve our mission and help mitigate climate pollution,” said Ben Vitale, President of The Climate Trust.

About The Partners

The Climate Trust

The Climate Trust is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with over 15 years of carbon financing experience. Our mission is to provide expertise, financing, and inspiration to accelerate innovative climate solutions that endure. In order to arrest the rise in greenhouse gas emissions and to avoid the most dangerous impacts of climate change, The Climate Trust works to accelerate project implementation, develop financing solutions, and establish a supportive policy environment in the renewable energy, agriculture, forestry, energy efficiency and transportation sectors. For more information, please visit www.climatetrust.org.

Seattle City Light

Created by the citizens of Seattle in 1902, Seattle City Light today is the tenth largest public utility in the U.S. City Light has the lowest cost electric rates of any comparably-sized urban utility and remains a national leader in conservation and environmental stewardship. In 2005, City Light was the first utility to achieve net-zero carbon emissions and has achieved greenhouse gas neutrality every year since. For more information, please visit www.seattle.gov/light/.

Environmental Credit Corp

Environmental Credit Corp. develops, registers and manages projects that create greenhouse gas emission reduction credits, also known as 'carbon credits' or 'carbon offsets.' With more than 60 projects in the United States, Canada and Mexico, we're a leading supplier of high-quality, verified and registered carbon offsets. Offset credits from our projects are purchased for compliance in cap-and-trade programs, by voluntary utility programs, and by a wide variety of for-profit and non-profit businesses seeking to reduce their carbon footprint.

Cedar Grove Composting

Cedar Grove is an environmental solutions company that harnesses the vitality of organic waste by recycling it into innovative products. In doing so, Cedar Grove energizes cities, businesses and citizens to be a force for good by coming full circle with their organic waste. For more information, visit www.cedar-grove.com.