



# BIO-ENERGY FACILITIES

The new Renewable Energy Approval will support the Green Energy Act and the Ontario Government's climate change action plan that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions, increase renewable energy generation and conservation and create thousands of green jobs in Ontario.

## Bio-energy

Bio-energy facilities use the energy stored in organic matter to generate electricity. This organic matter can include agricultural residues, animal manure, waste wood, wood chips and bark. Bio-energy can be generated in a variety of ways.

- **Thermal treatment** facilities generate electricity through the combustion of wood or other solid biomass material.
- **Anaerobic digestion** facilities use bacteria to convert solid and liquid bio-energy into a biogas (similar to natural gas) that is then combusted to generate electricity.
- **Biofuel** facilities use the combustion of biomass-based liquid fuels, such as bio-diesel, to generate electricity.
- **Landfill gas** facilities combust captured methane gases generated from landfills to generate electricity.



Anaerobic digestion facility

## Renewable Energy Approval (REA)

There are all kinds of materials that come from organic matter, but to qualify for an REA, bio-energy facilities must use biomass, biofuel or biogas source material as defined under the Electricity Act, 1998 and O. Reg. 160/99 made under the Act.

The requirements that must be met to obtain an REA vary depending on the facility location (e.g. on a farm), feedstock material (e.g. agricultural wastes) and size (e.g. greater or less than 500 KW).

Most farm based anaerobic digestion facilities have to meet a setback of 250 m from buildings used by people, such as a residence. In some cases, facilities can meet a set of best management practices to mitigate impacts to reduce a setback to 125 m. Large industrial facilities will have to submit studies identifying noise, odour and pollutant impacts and how these impacts will be addressed.

## Nutrient Management

Anaerobic digestion facilities that are located on a farm and are already subject to an approved Nutrient Management Strategy under the Nutrient Management Act, 2002 and would not have required a Waste Certificate of Approval are exempt from obtaining an REA.

## General Information

The Renewable Energy Approval integrates study requirements under the Environmental Assessment Act and provincial standards under the Environmental Protection Act. The improved process replaces what was largely an applicant-driven environmental assessment framework with clear provincial rules and requirements. The REA process continues to ensure transparent decision-making and mandatory public consultation.

## Consultation

The REA has established clear requirements around public consultation and community awareness. Applicants must notify nearby landowners and the community early in the planning stages, and hold at least two public consultation meetings. They must also consult with municipalities on matters related to servicing and infrastructure, and must engage Aboriginal communities early in the REA process to ensure that any impacts to Aboriginal or treaty rights are addressed.

To learn more, visit:

**Ministry of the Environment**

[www.ene.gov.on.ca](http://www.ene.gov.on.ca)

**Renewable Energy Facilitation Office**

1-877-440-REFO (7336)

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## Appealing an Approval Decision

Anyone can appeal the approval of a proposed renewable energy project. The Environmental Review Tribunal will have six months to assess whether or not the proposed project will cause serious harm to human health or serious and irreversible harm to plant life, animal life or the natural environment.

This balances the need for certainty and timeliness of approvals with the need for legitimate concerns to be heard and addressed.

For more information on the Environmental Review Tribunal and how to appeal, please visit [www.ert.gov.on.ca](http://www.ert.gov.on.ca).

