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Generate Upcycle Celebrates Reopening of New York Anaerobic Digester and Biogas Plant

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More than 40 state and local officials joined Generate Upcycle staff recently in Auburn, New York, at a ribbon cutting to celebrate the reopening of the Cayuga Anaerobic Digester and Biogas Plant.

Courtesy of Generate Upcycle

The Cayuga Digester recently completed a 3-year long project to produce renewable natural gas (RNG), and successfully completed “hot commissioning,” injecting gas into the natural gas pipeline for the first time in August.

Generate Upcycle has invested nearly $30 million into reviving and upgrading its operations, more than doubling its capacity to process waste and generate renewable energy.

The digester utilizes biological processes to convert 90,000 tons of food waste per year into RNG and nitrogen-rich organic fertilizer used on more than 1,000 acres of local farmland. Packaged food and beverages are depackaged, while innovative technology sorts and bales the cardboard, aluminum, plastic containers, and metal cans for recycling.

This enables the facility to produce 195,000 MMBtu of RNG annually — the equivalent of heating over 3,500 homes for a year from food waste.

“We’re particularly excited about the Cayuga facility because it not only allows us to process organic waste into renewable natural gas, but we are also able to capture significant amounts of recyclable packaging materials," says Bill Caesar, President of Generate Upcycle.

Cayuga produces 20 million gallons of nutrient-rich organic soil amendment annually, supporting local farms by improving soil structure, water retention, and nutrient uptake. The Cayuga Digester is one of three Generate Upcycle anaerobic digester facilities in New York State, including locations in Buffalo and Niagara.

Generate Upcycle owns and operates 12 anaerobic digestion (AD) sites across the U.S., Canada, and the UK. Eleven of these sites are AD facilities and one food waste pre-processing facility. Last year, their facilities processed more than 1 million tons of food waste, generating 110,000 Mh of electricity and 500,000 GJ of RNG.