

Organics Management to Reduce Methane and Climate Change Workgroup

Meeting #9 Notes (November 18, 2-4pm)

- I. Welcome and Agenda Overview
- II. Presentations to share background on Topic #7: Education/Generator behavior change/Source reduction/Technical assistance/Contamination/Labeling
 - a. Jay Blazey, Cedar Grove
 - i. Discussion included breakdown of materials contaminating load including plastic, glass and metal; and mitigating the difference between compostable plastic foodware and plastic foodware in general at the receiving site through visual inspection.
 - b. Susan Thoman, Compost Manufacturers Alliance
 - i. Discussion included policy recommendations to reduce contamination – including color marking bags to create a practical system to engage commercial entities, work from pile backwards on most prevalent contaminants and how to diminish upstream issues and employing technology to make us better sorters; thoughts on compostable bags and difference in the thickness of those bags (re: multifamily properties); and the difference between plastic, wood fiber, bioplastic and wood cutlery – pure wood is fine, no preference between bioplastic, and wood fiber-based products don't perform optimally regarding disintegration.
 - c. Geertje Grootenhuis, San Diego Food Alliance
 - i. Discussion included the kind of data required by CalRecycle; projects for food waste prevention component require data to prove that food waste was prevented. They set a baseline in institutions and households and use tracking devices to show and document there was a reduction in food waste. CalRecycle requires basic information about pounds of food recovered for food recovery programs.
 - d. Samantha Winkle, Waste Connections
 - i. Discussion included whether to ban non-compostable materials; asking every composting facility to accept compostable ware is a big ask, but getting Starbucks onboard would be important; whether making all composters accept some sort of compostable is a solution; feedback that consumers have very little tolerance for contamination in homeowner purchased compost and same in Agricultural community; whether it is worth the confusion with public to take products that may not create methane but will not breakdown – this would depend on how the compost facility is managed; and whether to accept any non-compostable products at all.
- III. Continue Topic #6 Presentations: Local governments/UTC/Infrastructure/New technologies/Geographic issues/Apple maggot/Localized/Rail
 - a. Derek Ruckman, WasteXperts (re tipping fees)
 - i. Discussion included whether there is preference to increase tipping fee tax versus requirement to recycle organics for manufacturers – a complex problem with complex set of solutions that may include something along the lines of EPR or mandates.
- IV. Continue Topic #6 Policy Discussion

a. Policy 1: State assistance to local governments

Strengths/Concerns/Issues/Questions

- Jay B.: Great idea – had not seen it before. Just came from speaking with rural communities – they need help. This is a good idea to help those areas.
- Neil E.: Economics don't change. Disposal is lowest cost option and jurisdictions will focus on reducing costs for ratepayers. CalRecycle has two basic responsibilities: waste permitting and environmental mitigation agency; but also have local assistance and market development side of house that provides technical assistance to local governments and helps them meet goals. CalRecycle is forming a team to both enforce and ensure compliance with SB 1383 in addition to providing technical assistance with implementation. Team at CalRecycle that does that work is funded by landfill tip fee surcharge. In the UK, landfill surcharge is \$50 per ton. There, it is used to help fund infrastructure for diversion – recycling and organics. This idea runs against what most landfilling companies will support in U.S./Washington.
- Logan H.: I think anything that helps new composters get started would be a huge benefit. State should also work to streamline approval process.
- Michael S.: Why limit assistance to just dairy digesters, why not include food waste digesters too?

b. Policy 2: Tax incentives

Strengths/Concerns/Issues/Questions

- Michael S.: Continue the tax exemption for digesters. Yes!

c. Policy 3: Increase landfill tipping fees

Strengths/Concerns/Issues/Questions

- Logan H.: It is possible to be supportive, but needs to be well communicated to everyone that why rates are going up is due to a state tax. Education campaign would be key. Important where the funding goes (e.g., to the diversion focus areas).
- Sam W.: One thing with increasing landfill tipping fees to keep in mind is that it makes people put garbage in yard and recycle containers. We need to figure out how to take care of that. We saw this in last recession and need to fund dealing with the garbage that goes into other streams.
- Kent K.: There is a 3.6% solid waste tax from WA in place now that was supposed to go to public works for local jurisdictions, but it is actually getting moved to fund education. Just getting it back to fund local jurisdictions as originally intended would be great. The tax is on all solid waste – let's call it back.
 - 2023 is when the sweep to education ends.

- V. Next meeting: 12/2, 2-4pm
 - a. Continue policy discussion for Topic #6
 - b. Start policy discussion for Topic #7: Education/Generator behavior change/Source reduction/Technical assistance/Contamination/Labeling
- VI. Meeting notes and presentations will be posted on www.OrganicsWorkgroup.org