

SWAC Subcommittee on Organics Recycling and Composting Meeting Notes from 3-25-08

Stakeholders Present: Abigail Maynard, Mark Cooper, Al Rosenberg, Steven Fass, Paul Szwedo

DEP Staff Present: K.C. Alexander, David McKeegan, Gene MacGillis, Joe Schiavone

Introductions: Please see attached list for complete and revised member contact information.

Old Business: Status on Permit Priority Policy, Monies for Home Compost Bins, Farmers' Markets.

- The draft of the Materials Management and Compliance Assurance (MMCA) Permit Prioritization Policy is still in internal review and will be expanded to include recycling of other materials, not just organics.
- The unspent SEP money from the CRRA mercury thermometer exchange is not available to redirect to home compost bins. They will be using this money to fund other mercury-related efforts for CFL's.
- If we are going to ask for SEP money to be put toward a statewide fund for home compost bins, a written request needs to be submitted starting with the Assistant Director outlining the idea, how it would be managed, how much it would cost, etc. Tie into the Governors "Just One Thing" campaign. Perhaps the Cooperative Extension or conservation districts can distribute bins during annual plant sales.
- Still worthwhile to inquire with DAS on how/if a state contract for home compost bins can be developed. Could also include kitchen compost buckets & rain barrels.
- Confirmed through Rick Macsuga of the Dept. of Agriculture that no pre-approvals are necessary to place home composting information at [Farmers' markets](#). Most Markets do not have general information tables. Would need to ask individual vendors for permission.
- The New Haven area [City Seed](#) coordinator was receptive, so we will start there instead of statewide.
- Will ask DEP intern if she can help get started on updating our brochure.

New Business and Discussion: Federal Food Donation Act, commercial food pulpers/grinders.

- [Federal Food Donation Act of 2007](#) is making its way through Capitol Hill. It has passed the House and has been referred to the committees of Homeland Security and Government Affairs.
- The Act revises the Federal Acquisition Regulation to provide that **each contract** in an amount greater than \$25,000 **for the provision, service, or sale of food, or for the lease or rental of federal property to a private entity for events at which food is provided shall include a clause that:** (1) **encourages the donation of** excess, apparently wholesome **food to nonprofit organizations** that provide assistance to food-insecure people; (2) **provides that** the head of an executive **agency shall not assume responsibility for the costs and logistics** of collecting, transporting, maintaining the safety of, or distributing such food; and (3) states that executive **agencies and contractors** making donations are **protected from civil or criminal liability** under the Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act.
- Caterers routinely over-prepare food by an average of 25%. The Federal Food Donation Act would not only help the hungry, but would result in less waste being disposed through source reduction. This act, if it becomes law, would be something for our state to adopt in support of ending hunger and waste reduction strategies. Perhaps Foodshare and similar organizations can propose this next year.
- KC & CJ attended the Massachusetts Organics Summit. They found that the vendors of commercial-size food grinders and pulpers (i.e. big garbage disposals) are encouraging clients to use the sink as a disposal method for food waste siting reduced waste collection, hauling and disposal costs of traditional disposal and/or composting options. This puts concentrated waste into the sewage treatment system and transfers the cost of disposal from the generator to the taxpayer. Charging generators a surcharge for this concentrated waste would be an incentive to recycle organics. Some treatment plants already have hefty surcharges.
- Al commented that fines/tickets for driving overweight vehicles could be reduced through a court arbitrator if the violator agrees to donate the money to a non-profit such as battered women's shelter instead. He will get us more background information on this. Perhaps get environmental groups on list of potential recipients.

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Next Steps: Draft request for SEP \$, start drafting home composting info for Markets.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, April 22, 2008 at 10:45 following the main SWAC meeting. Room TBA.