



## Managing Waste in CT Schools

# Recycling ... It's the Law

CT has had mandatory recycling for a number of items in effect since January 1, 1991.

## ***Everyone must recycle.***

That includes residents whether living in a single or multi-family building, every business including non-profits, and all public and private agencies and institutions (e.g. colleges, hospitals, local and state government agencies).

## ***It's the Law!***

[Recycling Its the Law](#)



# Items Designated (Mandated) for Recycling:

- Glass & Metal Food & Beverage Containers
- Plastic Containers (PET or PETE #1)
- Plastic Containers (HDPE #2)
- Corrugated Cardboard
- Boxboard
- Newspaper
- Magazines
- White & Colorful Office Paper
- Scrap Metal, including appliances
- Ni-Cd Rechargeable Batteries (from consumer products)
- Waste Oil (crankcase oil from internal combustion engines)
- Leaves (must be composted)
- Lead Acid Battery or Motor Vehicle Batteries
- Commercially Generated Source Separated Organic Materials (Only applies to those businesses compelled to do so per CGS Section 22a-226e)
- **Banned from disposal:** televisions, computers, cellphones, mercury-containing products

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Public Act 11-217 passed in 2011, CT first state in nation to pass mandatory organics recycling law.

- 2011 – waste generators generating 104 tons/year and within 20 miles of authorized facility
- 2012 – reduced to 52 tons/year for 2020 and 26 tons/year for 2022 and within 20 miles
- 2023 – expanded definition of waste generators, removed 20-mile radius
- 2023 – triggered generators required to submit report on amount of donated food & food scraps diverted, in effect March 1, 2025

**PA 24-45 - 2024 – K-12 schools generating 26 tons or more within 20-mile radius of authorized facility, in effect July 1, 2026**

Executive Order 21-3, Sec. 3(A) – By 2024, executive branch agencies shall implement organics and food waste diversion programs. Incl. State Technical Schools.



# Connecticut's Commercial Organics Recycling Law (CORL)

## Triggered Organic Waste Generators:

- Commercial food wholesalers or distributors
- Industrial food manufacturers or processors
- Supermarkets
- Resorts and conference centers
- Institutions – any establishment engaged in providing hospitality, entertainment or rehabilitation and health care services, and any hospital, educational facility or correctional facility.
- K-12 Schools - Public or non-public school building or educational facility, if they generate 26 tons/year and within 20 miles of authorized facility



# Public Act 24-45

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Sec. 6(a)(5) On and after July 1, 2026, each **public or nonpublic school building or educational facility** in which students in grades kindergarten to twelve, inclusive, or any combination thereof, are enrolled, that is located not more than twenty miles from either an authorized source separated organic material composting facility and that generates an average projected volume of not less than twenty-six tons per year of source-separated organic materials shall:

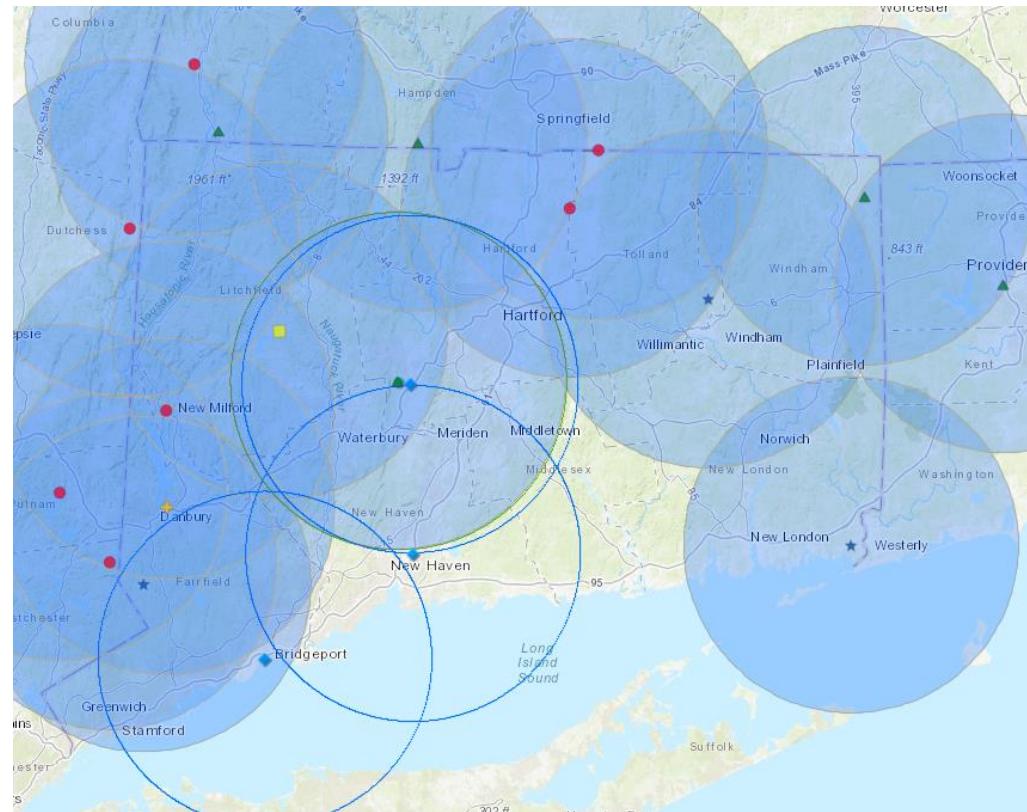
- (A) Separate such source separated organic materials from other solid waste; and
- (B) ensure that such source-separated organic materials are recycled at any authorized source-separated organic material composting facility that has available capacity and that will accept such source-separated organic material.



# Is My School Triggered by the Law?

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- School building is not more than twenty miles from an authorized source separated organic material composting facility and...



[Food Residual Composting Facilities](#)

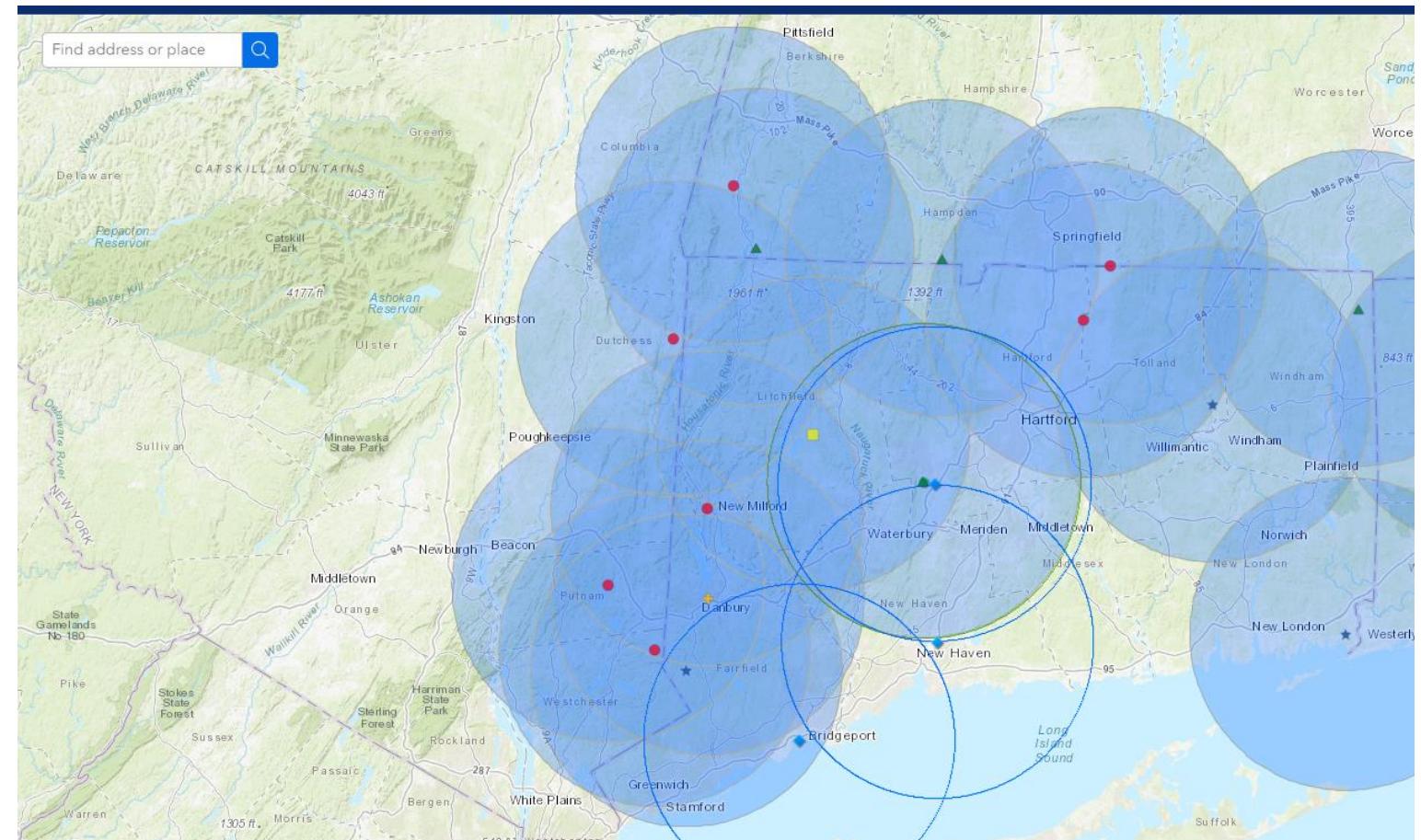
[Map of - Food Residual Recycling](#) – currently being updated – this image is a draft

# Additional Authorized Compost Sites Being Added

- Stonington Transfer Station
- West Haven Leaf Compost Facility
- Litchfield Recycling Center
- Mansfield Transfer Station
- Ridgefield Transfer Station
- Fort Hill Farm AgGrid in Thompson

## Across the border:

- McEnroe Organic Farm - Millerton, NY
- Mother Nature's Farms, Inc. - Carmel, NY
- Snow Hill Farm, LLC - North Salem, NY
- Sheffield Foods/Biosphere Farms – Sheffield, MA
- Pine Island Farm – Sheffield, MA
- Rockwood Ag-Grid, LLC – Granville, MA
- Shadow Valley Farm – Somers, MA
- Anaergia Rhode Island – Johnston, RI



Map of - Food Residual Recycling – currently being updated – this image is a draft

Find address or place

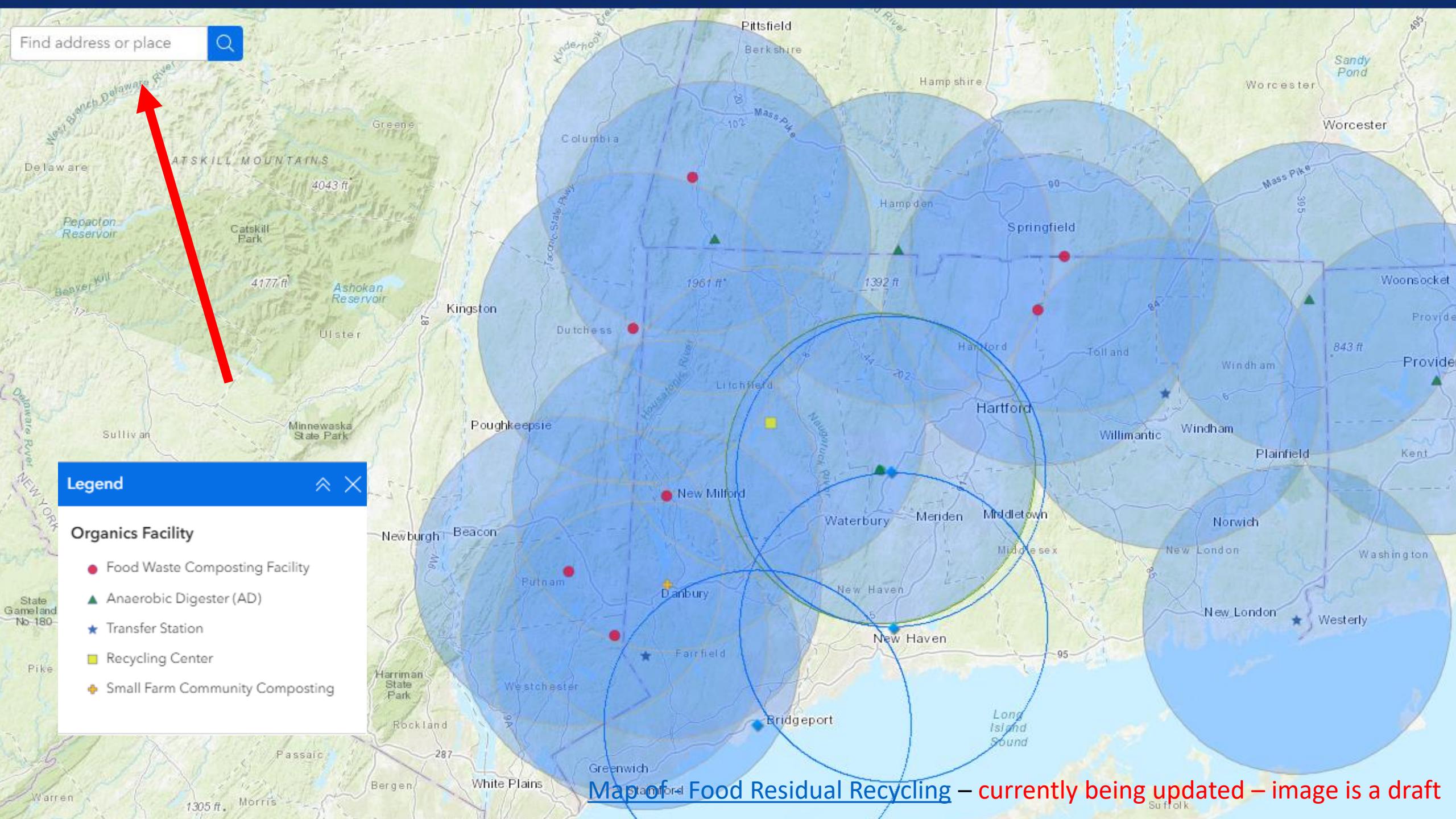


## Legend

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## Organics Facility

- Food Waste Composting Facility
  - ▲ Anaerobic Digester (AD)
  - ★ Transfer Station
  - Recycling Center
  - ✚ Small Farm Community Composting



Map of Food Residual Recycling – currently being updated – image is a draft

# Is My School Triggered by the Law?

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- ... the school generates an average projected volume of not less than twenty-six tons per year of source-separated organic materials (SSOM).



Mill Hill, Holland Hill or Riverfield School, Fairfield, CT

# CET's Wasted Food Estimation Guide

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Doesn't take into account  
if your school serves

- breakfast,
- classroom snacks,
- teacher's room,
- kitchen food waste,
- culinary classrooms,
- afternoon/weekend  
and / or summer meals

- Only calculates lunch food waste

	Average Measurement		Material
Students [Elementary School]	1.13	lbs/student/week	Food Waste
Students [Middle School]	0.73	lbs/student/week	Food Waste
Students [High School]	0.35	lbs/student/week	Food Waste
Disposed Waste <sup>1</sup>	45	% of disposed waste by weight	Food Waste

# In Summary: Recycling

- Schools should be collecting and recycling all mandatory recyclables they generate in:
  - school buildings
  - school grounds
  - Ballparks & athletic fields
- Great place to start:
  - paper in offices and classrooms,
  - cardboard
  - metal and plastic containers in kitchens

# In Summary: Organics/SSOM

- Start planning for when your school may be required to collect food scraps.
  - Consider conducting a food sort:
    - Identify teachers/classrooms that could conduct some food sort:
      - collecting food scraps,
      - food sharing table,
      - Bucket for milk, juice and other liquids
      - Container for mixed recycling (single stream) such as plastic and metal cans and bottles and empty milk cartons)
      - Trays and utensils (if reusable), and;
      - Trash.
    - “Citizen Science” – consider working with us to strengthen the calculator
  - Identify the direct and indirect costs associated with food scrap collection:
    - Staff to oversee collection, could be with students, to ensure no contamination
    - Cafeteria collection system, working with maintenance/facility staff
    - Food scraps hauler/collector, could be same or different than waste/recycling hauler
    - Or, consider composting food scraps on-site

# How DEEP can help

- On-line resources to help facility managers, food service staff, principals and teachers.
  - Webinar – Spring 2025 to learn about DEEP’s new School Recycling webpage including a tool kit, that will continue to be added supplemented.
- Help schools determine if they are triggered by the law.
  - Webinar – Spring 2025 to learn how to calculate lunch food scrap generation to determine if generate 26 tons or more.
- Center for Eco Technology, under contract with DEEP to assist businesses, including some schools, come into compliance with recycling and organics recycling laws.
  - [reducwastect@cetonline.org](mailto:reducwastect@cetonline.org) 888.410.3827
  - <https://www.cetonline.org/wasted-food-assistance-in-Connecticut/>



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# Food Waste Prevention & Food Recovery Roadmap - DRAFT

Sherill Baldwin, CT DEEP  
Solid Waste Advisory Committee Meeting, January 28, 2025



Connecticut Department of Energy &  
Environmental Protection

# Methodology

- Reviewed current Connecticut laws and regulations and food waste prevention and food recovery policies in other states
- Used CT DEEP facility reporting data and ReFED data
- Coordinated listening sessions with different sectors of the food system: supermarkets, food bank, food recovery organizations, consultants working in zero waste/food waste sphere, piggery/animal feed company
- Coordinated a public listening session to review preliminary results and to gather feedback for next steps
- Next steps: additional listening sessions and data gathering, specifically additional food banks, food pantries, schools, farms and others as identified

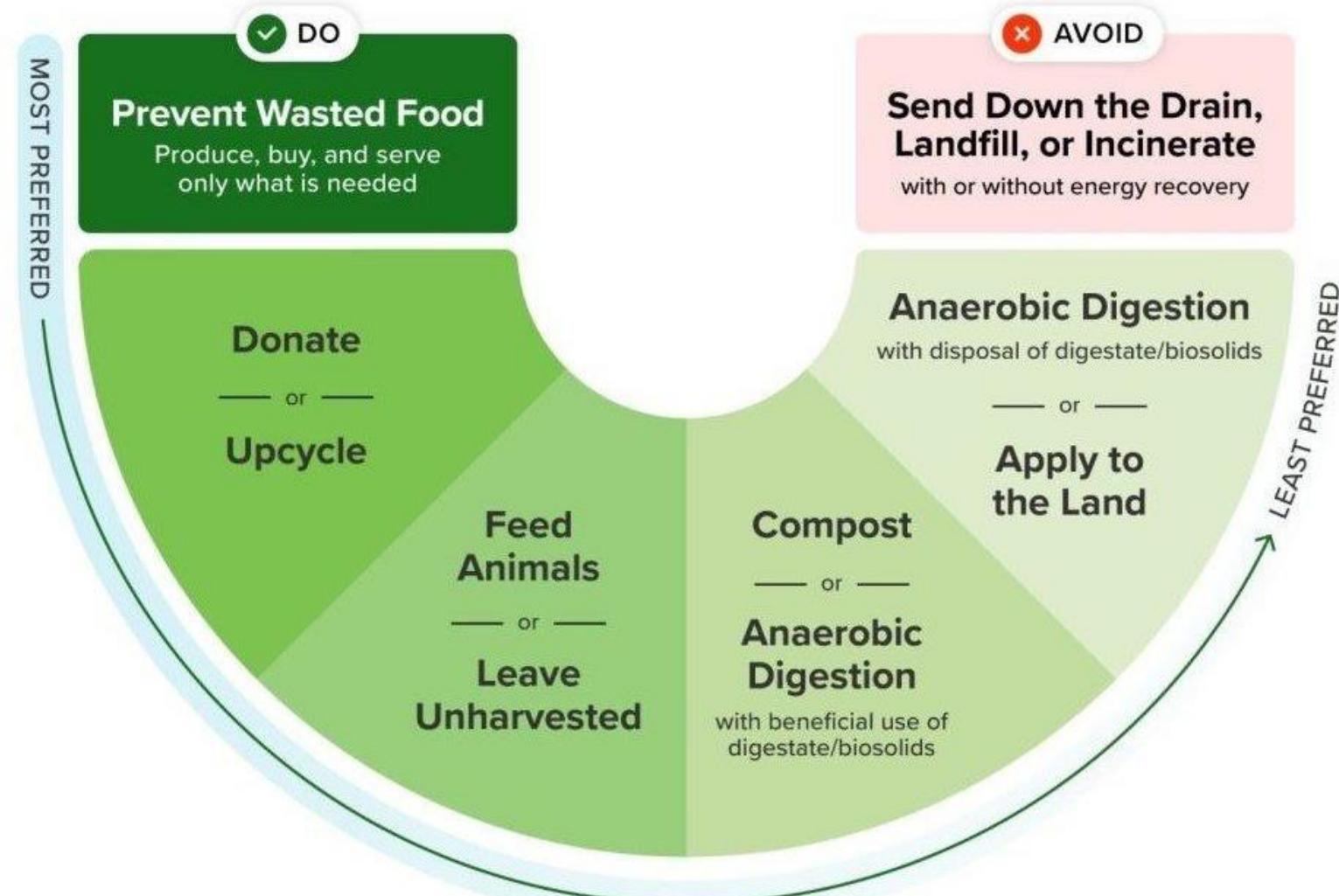
# Goal of FWP & FR Roadmap

- Identify ways to prevent food loss
- Increase recovery of edible food for humans and animals
- Reinforce that donating surplus food is safe and legal
- Identify programs and policies to meet these goals



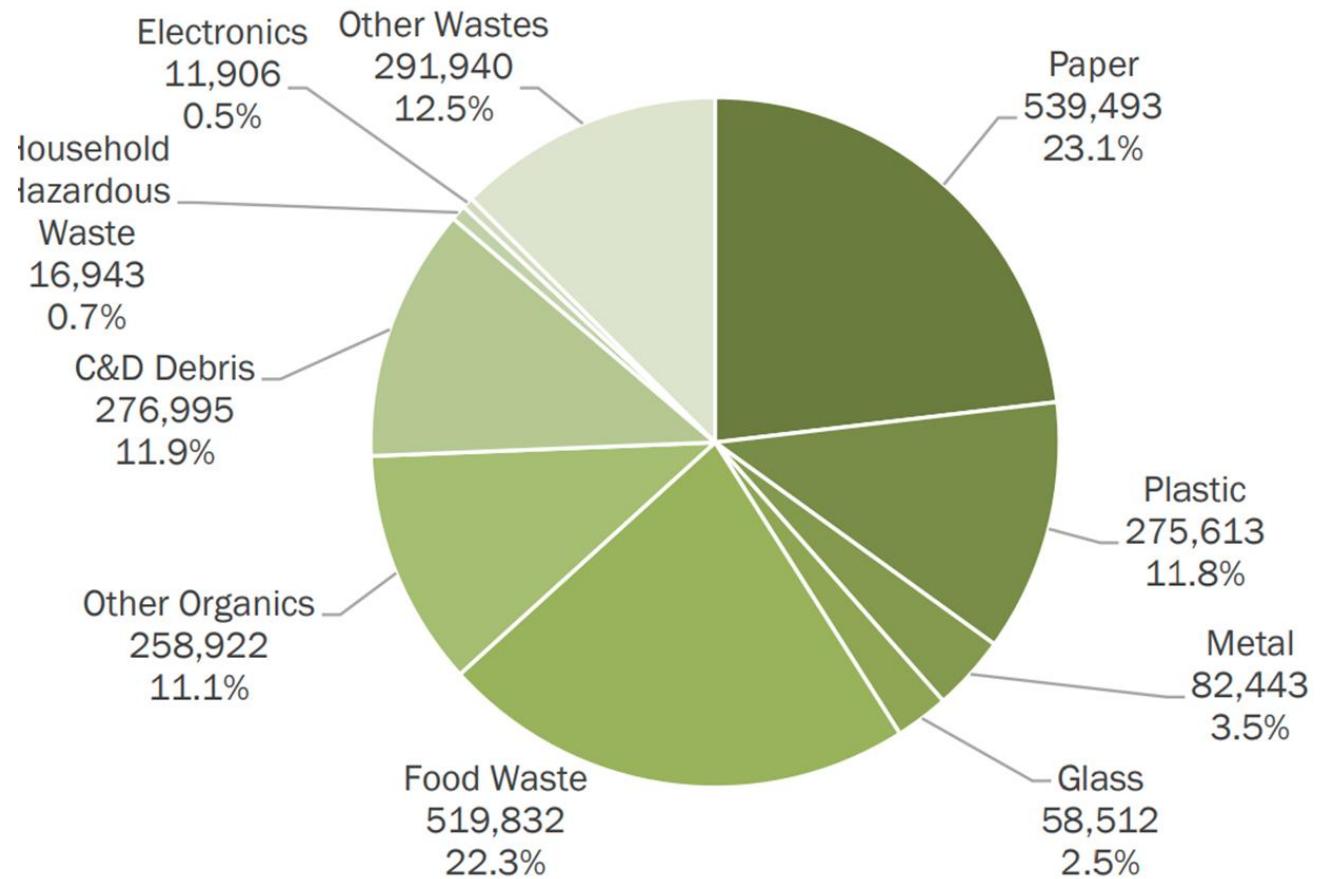
## Wasted Food Scale

How to reduce the environmental impacts of wasted food



# CT Municipal Solid Waste Characterization

- Food is wasted at every level of the food system
- An estimated 22% of the CT's Municipal Solid Waste is food waste
- EPA estimates that 70% of that is edible
- Preliminary data suggests Connecticut is recovering about 3% - 10% of that edible food



# 727 Thousand Surplus Food Tons were generated in all sectors across Connecticut in 2022.

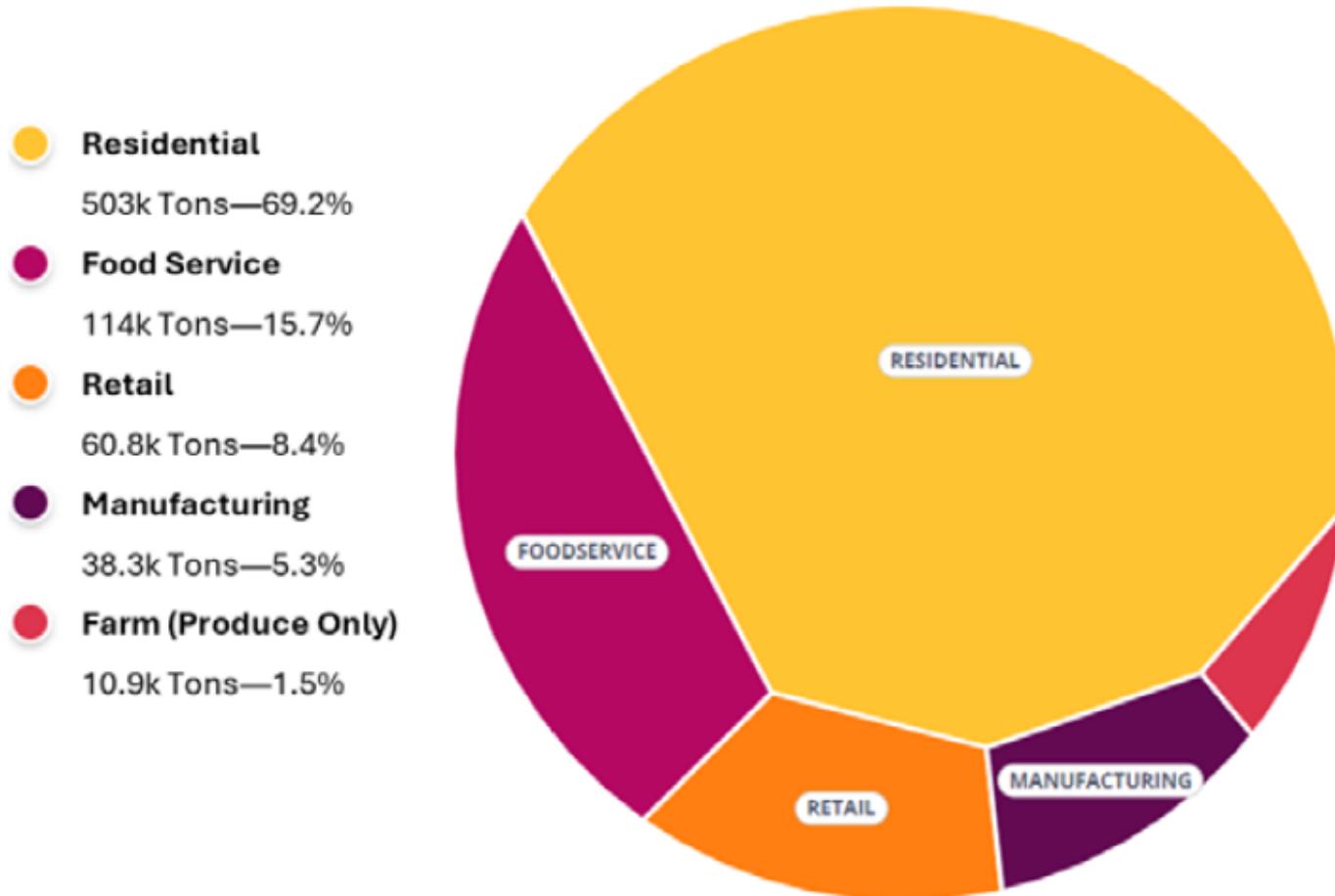


Figure 3: Connecticut's surplus food generated by sector estimates from ReFED's Insights Engine tool.

# 2022 Food Recovery Data

FIGURE 2: 2022 Food Recovery Data from Food Rescue US and Haven's Harvest					
GEOGRAPHIC AREA	ORGANIZATION	POUNDS (2022)	TONS (2022)	NUMBER OF FOOD DONORS	TOTAL# CO2 PREVENTED (Tons)
Fairfield County	Food Rescue US- Fairfield County	4,780,078	2390	278	1298
Northwest Connecticut	Food Rescue US- Northwest	1,198,985	600	77	326
Hartford County	Food Rescue US- Hartford	476,839	238	14	129
Greater New Haven County; New London area	Haven's Harvest	1,500,000	750	190	407
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>7,955,875</b>	<b>3978</b>	<b>559</b>	<b>2160</b>

# Key Terms

- **Food Waste Prevention** - actions to prevent food from being wasted in the first place.
- **Edible Food** - encompasses any food that is safe and suitable for human consumption. This includes items like fresh produce, packaged foods, and prepared meals. It also covers food that is still perfectly fine to eat but might not meet market standards due to factors like appearance, size, or past “best-by” labels.
- **Food Recovery** - involves collecting edible food that would otherwise be wasted and redistributing it to those who can benefit from it. This can include collecting excess food from grocery stores, restaurants, and other sources such as food manufacturers, and then distributing it to food pantries, shelters, or other organizations that feed people and/or provide food to the community.
- **Food Donor** - is an entity, whether an individual or a business, that donates surplus food to those that will consume it. Food donors include, but are not limited to, retailers, restaurants, farms, food manufacturers, or any organization that has excess food that would otherwise go to waste. Donating surplus food helps address food insecurity and reduces food waste.

# Key Terms

- **Surplus Food** - refers to edible food that remains unsold or unused by a business or entity. This can include food that is still safe to eat but might not be suitable for regular sale due to factors like size, appearance, past the “best-buy” date or other quality considerations. Surplus food can be donated to prevent waste and help those in need.
- **Food Waste or Wasted Food** - encompasses all edible food that is discarded, as well as inedible food or parts of food.
- **Source-Separated Organic Materials (SSOM)** The statutory (Sec. 22a-226e) language states “Source separated organic material” (SSOM) means organic material, including, but not limited to, food scraps, food processing residue and soiled or unrecyclable paper that has been separated at the point or source of generation from nonorganic material.
- **Food Scraps** - refers to the parts of food that are not intended for consumption, such as peels, cores, bones, and other inedible portions. Food scraps also include trimmings and leftovers from meal preparation, as well as any surplus food that isn't suitable for edible food donation.
- **Diversion** - refers to the practice of diverting organic materials, such as food scraps, away from traditional disposal methods such as landfills and incineration. Instead, these materials are directed towards more sustainable alternatives like composting or anaerobic digestion.

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  - Institutions – any establishment engaged in providing hospitality, entertainment or rehabilitation and health care services, and any hospital, educational facility or correctional facility.
- Executive agency facilities
- K-12 Schools
  - Public or non-public school building or educational facility



# Connecticut's Commercial Organics Recycling Law (CORL)

Waste generators triggered by the CORL, meaning they generate 26 tons or more annually, and in the case of schools are within 20 miles of an authorized composting facility, **are required to report to DEEP the amount of edible food donated** and who they are partnering to manage surplus food.

This provision goes into effect  
March 1, 2025.



# Suggestions for Change

- Clearer date labelling
- Tax incentives for food donations
- Food donation law
- Provide grants for food waste reduction efforts
- Statewide consumer education campaigns
- Encourage voluntary reporting





1/28/2025

## Current Date Labeling Requirements in CT

- “Sell by” or “use by” dates are not required on most food products sold in Connecticut.
- Products imprinted with those labels must comply with national standards adopted by Connecticut. Once product stamped with date, it cannot be changed or modified.
- Connecticut has regulations for milk and milk products, using “last sale date,” which follows national standards.
- Connecticut also has some date labeling requirements for shellfish
- Connecticut does not prevent the sale of food products after date labels.



## Policy Considerations

- Differentiate between quality and safety labels
- Standardize language
- Mandate safe labeling
- Donation of food past quality date
- Education

# Tax Incentives for Food Donations

- Tax Credits vs. Tax Deductions
- Customizing the Tax Incentive
- Reasonable Limits on Tax Incentives
- Valuing Credits at Fair Market Value
- Additional Tax Incentives





## Food Donation Law

- Set a food recovery target and donation initiative
- Require donation of food that meets health and safety requirements
- Apply a tiered and phased-in approach for donation requirements
- Enhance capacity planning
- Amplify education and outreach
- Coordinate policy execution with local jurisdictions
- Monitor and track outcomes

# Provide Grants for Food Waste Reduction Efforts

- State-wide food waste prevention campaign that includes community-based social marketing
- Technical assistance to food businesses
- Support food banks and food recovery organizations to bolster food rescue infrastructure
- Create state-wide gleaning coordination to support farms
- Create and/or fund existing safe handling training for staff and volunteers
- Support cooking classes and other programs in schools and for adults





1/28/2025

# Statewide Consumer Education Campaigns

- Community-Based Social Marketing research before a campaign ensures message is impact for residents and provide direction on new behaviors sought.
- Workshops - provide hands-on assistance and/or promote existing programs that help residents understand how to reduce food waste, understand date labels, learn basic cooking skills, how to preserve food, etc.
- Annual Connecticut Food Waste Prevention Week! This year, April 7 – 13, 2025.

# Voluntary Reporting

- If businesses, schools or other entities not triggered by the Commercial Organics Recycling Law are donating excess or surplus food, DEEP would benefit from having this data to identify areas for improvement in different business sectors and quantify the extent of food redistribution in the state if reporting to DEEP was required.
- This data-driven approach could assist the state in measuring the impact of the law on food recovery, waste diversion and food insecurity.

A few more thoughts

# Food Donation Legal Fact Sheets:

- [Connecticut Food Donation: Date Labeling Laws](#)

- [Connecticut Food Donation: Liability Protections – updated 2024!](#)

- [Connecticut Food Donation: Tax Incentives for Businesses](#)

- [Connecticut Food Donation: Feeding Food Scraps to Animals](#)

## Legal Fact Sheet

### Connecticut Food Donations: Liability Protections

Created by the Harvard Law School Food Law and Policy Clinic, October 2024

Businesses (including farms) and nonprofits that donate or distribute donated food are generally well-protected by laws designed to provide immunity from liability related to such donations. The federal Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act provides the basis for liability protection for food donors and nonprofit organizations that distribute donated food.<sup>1</sup> In 2022, the Food Donation Improvement Act expanded upon and clarified these protections. Additionally, Connecticut state law provides liability protection to food donors and distributors. Consequently, the risk of liability for food donation is very low; research does not turn up a single court case related to food donation liability.

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#### The Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Act

The Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act, as amended by the Food Donation Improvement Act<sup>2</sup> (together referred to as the Emerson Act), provides a federal baseline of liability protection to encourage food donations to individuals experiencing food insecurity.<sup>3</sup> The Emerson Act covers individuals, government entities, schools,<sup>4</sup> businesses, nonprofit organizations, and the officers of businesses and nonprofit organizations. It also covers gleaners—individuals that harvest donated agricultural crops for nonprofit organizations that distribute to the needy.<sup>5</sup> These individuals and entities are protected so long as the following four requirements are met:

- 1) **Qualifying Foods and Grocery Products:** The donor must donate “apparently wholesome food” or an “apparently fit grocery product” that meets “all quality and

We recognize...

Preventing food loss and recovering and redistributing edible food could be a significant step in helping the food insecure, but important to recognize it won't solve the root causes of hunger and poverty.



# Next Steps

- In our pursuit to create a comprehensive Roadmap, we also acknowledge that time constraints prevented engagement with some vital stakeholders within the food system.
- As we move ahead, it is imperative to prioritize the inclusion and integration of additional diverse perspectives and new policy ideas, as a result of additional conversations with farmers, public and private school communities, additional food banks and food relief organizations and others we have yet to identify.





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