



**CCSMM**

CT Coalition for Sustainable  
Materials Management

## **NOTICE**

### **ORGANICS INFRASTRUCTURE INITIATIVE**

#### Goals of the Initiative

Organic materials make up a significant portion of the municipal solid waste (MSW) stream in Connecticut, and therefore the largest opportunity to increase diversion from disposal. As Connecticut faces higher costs and more limited capacity for waste disposal, diversion of organic material from disposal presents one of the most promising options for reducing disposal costs, improving environmental outcomes, and creating local jobs. For this reason, the Connecticut Coalition for Sustainable Materials Management (CCSMM)<sup>1</sup> is launching an Organics Infrastructure Initiative that will advance coordinated efforts to support more organics infrastructure and services to support processing of organics material, and diversion of organic material from MSW, that is accessible to communities across the State.

The 2015 Connecticut Waste Characterization Study shows over 900,000 tons per year of organic material, including over 500,000 tons per year of food waste, entering the municipal solid waste (MSW) stream. The State currently has the following organics infrastructure:

- One operating commercial-scale anaerobic digestion (AD) facility with a capacity of 360 TPD of organics.
- Three commercial AD facilities that have been permitted but not constructed.
- Three commercial composting facilities processing approximately a total of 6,500 tons of food waste per year.
- A recently constructed on-farm AD in Thompson, CT is in the final stage of obtaining DEEP permits to receive 100 tons per day of food scraps.

Organics diversion makes environmental and economic sense, as the tip fee for food waste and residuals at AD and composting facilities can be lower than municipal solid waste (MSW) disposal, so long as

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<sup>1</sup> DEEP and municipalities from across the state joined together to form the Connecticut Coalition for Sustainable Materials Management (CCSMM) to explore ways to reduce the amount of waste that is generated in Connecticut, and improve options for reuse, recycling, organics collection and other innovative solutions. CCSMM is looking to find preferred ways to reduce and manage the amount of waste produced in Connecticut with a focus on system reliability, environmental sustainability, and fiscal predictability.

transportation costs can be optimized. Therefore, it is also important to ensure that models for low-cost transportation are available and can be scaled up to provide affordable access to expanded organics infrastructure.

Based on a December 2020 CCSMM survey, 49 municipalities participating in CCSMM expressed interest in hosting organics processing infrastructure. A CCSMM-convened Working Group on Food Scraps & Organics<sup>2</sup> recommended many near-term actions that can help expand organics diversion, including convening a stakeholder group or initiative to facilitate ongoing dialogue and coordination to support increased organics infrastructure and services. The Working Group also recommended updating DEEP webpage resources to clarify and simplify the planning and permitting process; enhancing the Commercial Organics Recycling law; developing additional food donation for human consumption opportunities; expanding education, outreach, and support for composting of food scraps; promoting co-collection of food scraps and organics with MSW; streamlining siting and permitting for composting facilities; increasing compliance assistance for organics generators within the Commercial Organics Recycling Law; and prioritizing enforcement to ensure a level playing field. There is a critical need to expand organics infrastructure and diversion services, both to handle increased quantity of material, and to provide for infrastructure or services that are geographically accessible (ie., with low transportation costs) all across the state. DEEP will be convening through CCSMM an Organics Infrastructure Initiative in 2021 to work with municipalities, developers, and other stakeholders to address this need.

DEEP/CCSMM will convene an online, introductory meeting on February 26, 2020 from 10:00am to 1:00pm to host a discussion with interested stakeholders and seek input on this Initiative. The agenda for the meeting is attached, and includes anticipated questions for discussion. **Register for this forum at the following link: [https://ctdeep.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJMrc-iggDkiHdyS65F\\_Riue9NGxepmOPGPa](https://ctdeep.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJMrc-iggDkiHdyS65F_Riue9NGxepmOPGPa)**

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<sup>2</sup> Further information and recordings of meetings of the Food Scraps & Organics working group can be accessed here: <https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/Waste-Management-and-Disposal/CCSMM/Food-scraps-organics>

## **Tentative Agenda**

### **Organics Infrastructure Initiative – Opening Forum**

February 26, 2021

10 am - 1 pm

#### **I. Welcome and Introductory Remarks**

#### **II. Goals & Scope of the Organics Infrastructure Initiative**

The **proposed activities** of the Organics Infrastructure Initiative will include:

1. Engaging with stakeholders on design and implementation of procurement opportunities for infrastructure and organics diversion services to support increased organics processing capability in the state, and to significantly increase accessible, affordable organics diversion from the MSW stream.
2. Facilitating municipal interest in hosting infrastructure.
3. Engaging with stakeholders on opportunities/efforts to improve the transparency, predictability, and efficiency of DEEP permitting for organics infrastructure.
4. Staying informed on legislative proposals that can strengthen organics diversion.

The proposed scope of **infrastructure and services** that will be addressed/considered in the Initiative:

- In scope: Donation programs, commercial-scale Anaerobic Digestion, commercial compost facilities, on-farm anaerobic digestion, and animal feed facilities
- In scope: Organics collection services including curbside and co-collection services, transfer stations, transfer station drop-off and technical assistance & enforcement for diversion mandates.
- Not in scope: biosolids/sewer sludge

#### **Key Questions for Discussion:**

- a. Are the goals listed in the accompanying Notice, and the proposed activities (1-4) of the Organics Infrastructure Initiative, the right goals/activities that this Initiative should be focusing on?*
- b. Is the proposed scope of infrastructure and services that will be addressed or considered in the Initiative the right scope to focus on to achieve the Initiative's goals?*

#### **III. Organics Processing Facilities – Developers' Perspectives**

Scaling up accessible organics processing infrastructure will likely require constructing new infrastructure in locations across Connecticut. Forty-nine municipalities participating in CCSMM have

indicated an interest in hosting organics infrastructure. A panel of developers will be invited to guide a discussion about the following questions:

**Key Questions for Discussion:**

- a. What kinds of site characteristics do developers need, for what types of organics processing operations?*
- b. What are developers' perspectives on what needs to be in place to attract investment/meet our goals?*
- c. How can we promote statewide accessibility of organics infrastructure and services to help reduce transportation costs?*

#### **IV. Organics Diversion Services – Haulers' Perspectives**

Scaling up accessible organics processing infrastructure will necessitate new types of services for affordable transportation of food scraps and organic materials. Many CCSMM members towns expressed interest in exploring residential food scrap programs; large commercial generators also need affordable transportation for diversion of source-separated organic material. A panel of haulers will guide discussion on models and considerations for developing these services across the state.

**Topics:**

- a. What models or opportunities are there for affordable organics collection, including regional coordination and co-collection?*
- b. What are haulers' perspectives on how to scale up collection and hauling services as organics infrastructure and capacity increases?*
- c. What new equipment or infrastructure might be needed? Are there special considerations for hauling organic material?*

#### **V. Permitting Support & Plans to Streamline Current Organics Processing Infrastructure and Opportunities**

As part of CCSMM's Menu of Options, DEEP has identified several opportunities to improve the transparency, predictability, and efficiency of permitting processes associated with organics diversion. DEEP staff will present on the following topics:

- DEEP's plans to improve the organics permitting process going forward
- Best practices to minimize impacts of new infrastructure development on environmental justice communities; Connecticut's Environmental Justice program & Community Benefits Agreements
- DEEP concierge and pre-application assistance services available to applicants

**Key Questions for Discussion:**

- What can DEEP do to help improve the transparency, predictability, and efficiency of permitting processes for organics infrastructure and services?*

- *How can DEEP, municipal hosts, and developers implement best practices to minimize impacts of organics diversion infrastructure and services on Environmental Justice communities?*

## **VI. Incentives & Procurement Strategies for Scaling up Organics Infrastructure & Services**

There are a variety of strategies available for supporting investment in organics infrastructure and services, such as municipal-led RFPs seeking bids for organics diversion services on behalf of local schools and businesses; low-cost loans and incentives available for developers; and virtual net metering programs and long-term power purchase agreements for electricity (or, potentially renewable natural gas) and renewable energy credits generated by anaerobic digesters.

### **Key Questions for Discussion**

- *What incentives and financing support is available for organics infrastructure and services?*
- *What procurement strategies have worked effectively to attract bids/investment from infrastructure developers or haulers?*
- *Should DEEP initiate a new procurement for long-term power purchase agreements for electricity and RECs from anaerobic digesters? Should/could such an RFP be coordinated with municipal RFPs for organics diversion services?*
- *What about procuring renewable natural gas (RNG) from anaerobic digesters—what considerations should inform any policy for RNG procurement?*

## **VII. Additional Discussion, Next Steps, Public Comment**