



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 930
AAC FOOD DIVERSION AND ANAEROBIC DIGESTION FACILITIES
March 17, 2021

To: Honored Chairs Sen. Cohen and Rep. Gresko, and Distinguished Members of the Environment Committee

From: Megan Macomber, Connecticut League of Conservation Voters

On behalf of the Connecticut League of Conservation Voters, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony **in support (with adjustments) of SB 930** to address expanding commercial composting in our state.

Connecticut is currently facing a severe waste crisis - outdated landfills are closing down, MIRA is scheduled to close, and our state will be resorting to the costly and environmentally damaging choice of shipping our trash to other states for disposal.

Food waste accounts for 20% of the 2.5 million tons of solid waste our state generates every year, while regional landfill capacity will shrink 40% in the next 5 years. An expansive composting program could divert 520,000 tons of food waste from our waste stream every year.

Our waste management goals require the diversion and/or recycling of at least 60% of the solid waste generated in the state by 2024. In order to reach these goals and advance the Comprehensive Materials Management Strategy, we would like to see this bill go further to create more efficient food waste diversion.

The Commercial Organics Ban, Public Act 11-217, should be amended in order to strengthen its effectiveness. Please consider adding these provisions to the existing language:

1. **ELIMINATE EXEMPTIONS:** The current law exempts some of the biggest generators of food waste such as universities, hospitals, food courts and stadiums. Any commercial entity that generates the established amount of food waste should have to divert it to a composting facility.
2. **LOWER QUALIFYING WEIGHT TO ½ TON PER WEEK:** In 2020, the organics ban was expanded to apply to entities generating more than one ton of food waste per week. The qualifying weight should be further decreased to ½ ton per week or 26 tons per year by 2023.
3. **REMOVE THE GEOGRAPHIC REQUIREMENTS:** The current law only applies to non-exempt food waste generators within 20 miles of a composting facility. We understand that waste transportation is expensive and hope to see more composting facilities in years to come. Rather than make geographic requirements, Connecticut should allow businesses to apply for an exemption if they are too far away from a composting facility.

4. **COMPLIANCE STAFF AND PENALTIES:** There are no penalties for non-compliance, making the current law unenforceable. Furthermore, DEEP only has the resources to staff one part time position responsible for compliance. Funding must be set aside for DEEP to hire more compliance technicians who can issue fines for violations of the food diversion policy.

We at CTLCV are encouraged to see this bill under consideration as a critical part of Connecticut's waste management infrastructure, and we urge the committee to go further in updating the 2020 Commercial Organics Ban.

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