

## THE PROBLEM

The U.S. wastes over 119 billion pounds of food annually. Meanwhile, the EPA reports that wasted food is the single most common material landfilled and incinerated in the U.S. (24% of landfilled and 22% of incinerated municipal solid waste). In Connecticut, food makes up about 22% of our waste. At the same time, food insecurity doubled in 2022, disproportionately impacting our state's most vulnerable residents, including over 83,000 children, Black and Latino adults, and people with disabilities. And the problem is only getting worse.

Trashing so much food spells terrible news for our communities and the environment. Whether wasted food is landfilled or incinerated, it generates toxic, climate-changing emissions. When landfilled, food releases more methane than any other material, which has an even worse impact than carbon dioxide in the short term. Connecticut has a legal obligation to reduce 45% of these toxic emissions by 2030 and has set the goal of reducing emissions by diverting 60% of the waste stream by 2024. But without a strong food waste prevention and recycling law, we can't meet this goal.

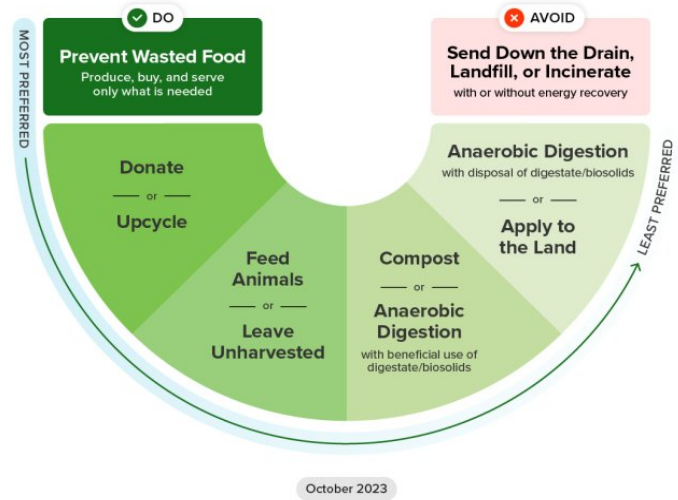
## A COMPREHENSIVE SOLUTION

The EPA's new wasted food scale outlines best practices to prevent and reduce food waste. For starters, we must avoid creating waste, which means producing, buying, and serving only what's needed. When there is excess food, it should be used to help fight food insecurity or feed animals. As a last option, we can compost or send food scraps to aerobic and anaerobic digesters. We need to keep food out of landfills, incinerators, and wastewater (including garbage disposals) at all costs.



### Wasted Food Scale

How to reduce the environmental impacts of wasted food



Currently, Connecticut requires that most large-scale producers of wasted food (over ½ ton per week) keep this material out of the trash. However, households, which are not included in the existing law, generate more than 60% of the wasted food that ends up in landfills. To be truly effective, the law needs to apply at all levels.

Connecticut needs to pass a comprehensive food waste prevention and recycling law. The law must include best practices for robust food waste prevention, which includes complying with the EPA's wasted food scale, investing in public education around food waste prevention, empowering DEEP to develop effective enforcement and incentive mechanisms, and investing in local and regional infrastructure. With a strong food waste prevention law, Connecticut can fight food insecurity, curb toxic emissions, and save our communities money on trash disposal.

## MORE INFORMATION

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