

## THE PROBLEM

Food waste accounts for over 20% of the 2.5 million tons of solid waste the state generates every year, while regional landfill capacity will shrink 40% in the next 5 years. As CT is facing this looming waste crisis, a broad reaching composting program holds the key to diverting nearly 520,000 tons of food waste from our overburdened waste stream.

CT's current composting law lacks any kind of enforcement and exempts some of the biggest food waste generators including food courts, hospitals, universities and stadiums. Updating Connecticut's composting law would create an incentive for new composting facilities to open, and provide CT the opportunity to divert over 520,000 tons of solid waste from incinerators and landfills annually.

## A COMPREHENSIVE SOLUTION

The Commercial Organics Ban, Public Act 11-217, should be amended in order to strengthen its effectiveness, create an incentive for new composting facilities, and to support sustainable waste management:

**Remove Exemptions for Commercial Industries.** Currently the law only applies to commercial food wholesalers and distributors, industrial food manufacturers and processors, supermarkets, resorts and conference centers. This exempts some of the largest food waste producers, including universities, hospitals, restaurants, food courts and stadiums, among other entities.

**Remove the Geographic Requirements.** The current law only applies within 20 miles of a composting facility in CT. There is no scientific or economic reason why the ban should not be statewide. Rather than a geographic requirement, Connecticut should allow businesses to apply for an exemption if they are too far away from a composting facility.

**Lower Qualifying Weight to ½ Ton Per Week.** In 2020 the organics ban was expanded from qualified entities generating more than two tons of food waste per week to one ton per week. Qualifying weight should be decreased to a 1/2 ton per week by 2023 to account for the South Meadows incinerator shut down scheduled for that year.



**Employ a Full-Time Compliance Tech at DEEP.** Funding for DEEP is critical if we want to ramp up our energy and environmental protection goals. Currently, DEEP only has the resources to staff one part-time position. The City of Seattle has twelve full time compliance techs for a similar population size to CT.

**Administer Fines for Businesses that Don't Comply.** There are no penalties for non-compliance, making the current law unenforceable.

## FAST FACTS

- ◆ **40%** of food grown in the United States is thrown away.
- ◆ Food waste makes up about **20-25%** of the national waste stream and is the largest recyclable material stream that we don't currently separate from trash at a significant scale.
- ◆ Connecticut throws away about half a million tons of food per year, or about **15%-20%** of total municipal solid waste according to DEEP.

## MORE INFORMATION

To learn more about composting, contact:

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