

Article 42 – Proposed Composting Rate Payer Plan – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Why Compost?

- **21%** of the Massachusetts landfill content is food waste.
- Food Waste produces most landfill GHG emissions as methane, which is 84 times more heat-trapping than CO₂.
- Composting organics is an opportunity to avoid greenhouse gas emissions and decrease landfill use.
- It is easy to use for a high number of benefits, with lower GHG emissions and lower solid waste fees for each household.

Why now?

- Concord has an existing goal of a 30% waste stream reduction by 2030. This goal is in both the Town's Climate Action and Resilience Plan and the MassDEP Solid Waste Master Plan.
- Concord will probably fail to meet this goal unless action is taken.
- At the state level, they are planning a 100% ban on commercial and residential solid food waste by 2030. If Concord acts now, we can help local restaurants and businesses financially and support them in going green.

What is a ratepayer system?

- Citizens can opt into the plan, **just like recycling and trash**, through the town website.
- We are **asking the town to consider negotiating with composting company vendors** so that the entire town has lower rates to pay compared to subscribing to composting as a singular household/commercial site.
- The composting company would have pre-existing infrastructure and resources to deal with the compost. Essentially, we would be outsourcing the composting process, but making it **easier to access for the entire community**.

Benefits of a rate payer system

- With ~670 households (out of ~6500) participating in Black Earth composting, Concord is already at the maximum density discount. The next step would be for **the Town to negotiate a lower rate with Black Earth** as sign-up benchmarks are met. This discount number is generally \$10 off per six-month billing cycle, or currently, **a 10% discount**.
- **Reduced garbage and solid waste costs** (also known as tipping fees) will result from composting. This is because they are reducing the weight of the solid waste by putting some of it into the compost. Solid waste is charged by the ton in Concord, so the costs will go down. Composting is not charged by the ton; there is one fixed rate, no matter how much composting you have.
- **Increased access to composting to residents through lower costs and easier transition**
- **Higher sign-ups lead to lower GHG emissions** - Current average household organic

waste generation is 8lbs/week. Without composting, this is equivalent to creating 4,298 tons of CO2 per year.

Who's already doing it?

- Ashland, Holliston, Milton, and Melrose and many other surrounding towns already have composting programs with a commercial-town relationship.

Who would pay for implementing it?

- The state has many grants available for the town to apply for. Bedford received enough grants to give \$10 back to residents who opted in through utility credit.
- **MassDEP's Sustainable Materials Recovery Program (SMRP) has awarded \$350K in grants** to municipalities over the past 10 years to start or expand upon their own curbside collection program or residential food waste diversion programs.

*Some statistics are from MassDEP.