

RE: S.B. 816: *AN ACT CREATING A REGIONAL COMPOSTING FACILITY SITING TASKFORCE*

Senator Cassano, Representative Gentile and members of the Planning & Development Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of Senate Bill 346.

CRRA is responsible for the implementation of the Solid Waste Management Plan (SWMP). The SWMP serves as the basis for Connecticut's solid waste management planning and decision-making. Accordingly, the SWMP ranks waste management methods from most to least preferable. In this hierarchy, source reduction is most preferable, followed by reuse, composting and recycling, energy recovery and, least preferable, landfilling. This hierarchy illustrates our belief that trash is not a waste but a valuable commodity containing raw materials and energy resources.

In 2011 Governor Malloy signed into law Public Act 11-217, An Act Concerning the Recycling of Organic Materials by Certain Food Wholesalers, Manufacturers, Supermarkets and Conference Centers. The law requires large generators of food waste to separate organics as soon as two permitted organics composting facilities are in service in the state.

Like many others in the environmental community, CRRA believes the positive impacts of large-scale composting cannot be understated. Studies show that approximately 20%, or about 200,000 tons per year, of the industrial/commercial waste stream in Connecticut contains organics that could be composted. Doing so would keep material out of landfills and trash-to-energy plants, helping the state reach its goal of diverting 58 percent of the waste stream. By composting, this organic material would be turned into a commodity valuable to gardeners and farmers, while its by-product, methane, can be captured and combusted to generate clean renewable electricity. Furthermore, today's in-vessel technologies enable us to minimize odors and other nuisances historically associated with composting facilities.

Development and operation of regional composting facilities would create new, quality jobs in a down economy, both temporary construction jobs and permanent positions for those operating these new facilities. Equally important, the creation of these composting facilities would go a long way towards achieving the waste diversion goals established by the SWMP.

CRRA has been Connecticut's leading recycler since 1991, and we are now ready to lead the state into a new era of composting. CRRA will soon solicit expressions of interest to identify prospective technologies and development partners as we look to develop one or more regional composting facilities. S.B. 346 will go a long way towards ensuring the future success of composting in the state of Connecticut. While today's compost facilities are nothing like the smelly facilities of the past, preconceived notions persist. This taskforce will provide a platform for education and community engagement in order to avoid future NIMBY issues.

In closing, CRRA's mission is to develop and implement environmentally sound solutions and best practices for solid waste disposal and recycling management on behalf of the residents of Connecticut. As such, it is our duty to strongly support and advocate for the passage of S.B. 346.