
OLR Bill Analysis

sSB 1046

AN ACT CONCERNING THE REDUCTION OF FOOD WASTE IN SCHOOLS.

SUMMARY

This bill establishes several requirements related to the disposal of organic material (e.g., food) in public schools.

Beginning January 1, 2024, the bill extends to local and regional boards of education the law's requirement for certain larger organic material generators to separate the materials and recycle them at composting facilities.

By the same date, the bill requires the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) commissioner to establish a voluntary pilot program for any local or regional board of education that wants to (1) separate source-separated organic materials and (2) ensure that the materials are recycled at authorized composting facilities with available capacity that will accept them.

It also allows any school under a local or regional board of education's authority, beginning with the 2023 school year, to implement a composting station program consistent with guidelines the State Department of Education (SDE) develops in consultation with DEEP.

Lastly, the bill allows two or more boards of education, upon written agreement, to enter into a cooperative arrangement to compost source-separated organic materials, just as they may already do to provide certain programs, services, and activities. By law, a cooperative arrangement may include the formation of a committee, whose membership the cooperating boards set, to supervise the program.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

ORGANIC MATERIALS LAW EXPANSION

Under the bill, beginning January 1, 2024, each local and regional board of education for a school district generating an annual average projected volume of at least 26 tons of source-separated organic materials and located within 20 miles of an authorized source-separated organic material composting facility must (1) separate the materials from other solid waste and (2) ensure that they are recycled at an authorized, source-separated organic material composting facility that has available capacity and is willing to accept them.

Currently, this requirement applies to commercial food wholesalers or distributors, industrial food manufacturers or processors, supermarkets, resorts, and conference centers.

Under existing law, generators may comply with the requirements by composting the organic materials or treating them with certain organic treatment equipment onsite. The bill correspondingly applies this exemption to the local and regional boards of education.

COMPOSTING STATION PROGRAM

Beginning with the school year starting July 1, 2023, the bill allows any school under a local or regional board of education's authority to implement a composting station program. The school must do so consistent with guidelines that SDE must develop, in consultation with DEEP, by January 1, 2024. For these purposes, a "composting station" is a designated location in a school cafeteria where students and school employees may deposit unconsumed organic material for composting.

Under the bill, the composting station program guidelines must at least include the following:

1. the types of organic material that may be deposited in a composting station,
2. best practices for food and beverage management and safety concerning the items deposited at a composting station, and

3. disposal processes for any organic material not used for composting.

The bill also requires the guidelines to be consistent with the rules and regulations of the state Department of Public Health, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

BACKGROUND

Organic Material and Composting Facilities

By law, “source-separated organic material” includes such things as food scraps, food processing residue, and soiled or unrecyclable paper that are separated, at generation, from nonorganic material (CGS § 22a-207(30)).

A “composting facility” is land, appurtenances, structures, or equipment where organic materials originating from another process or location and separated at generation from nonorganic material are recovered through accelerated biological decomposition under controlled aerobic or anaerobic conditions (CGS § 22a-207(29)).

Related Bill

sHB 5577, favorably reported by the Environment Committee, (1) requires DEEP, by October 1, 2023, to amend its regulations to expand the list of designated (i.e., mandated) recyclable items to include food scraps and (2) requires municipalities, by January 1, 2024, to separate their organic materials and have them recycled at a composting facility.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Committee on Children

Joint Favorable

Yea 14 Nay 5 (02/28/2023)