

# OFFICE OF FISCAL ANALYSIS

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sSB-1046

AN ACT CONCERNING THE REDUCTION OF FOOD WASTE IN SCHOOLS.

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## ***OFA Fiscal Note***

### ***State Impact:***

<b>Agency Affected</b>	<b>Fund-Effect</b>	<b>FY 24 \$</b>	<b>FY 25 \$</b>
Department of Energy and Environmental Protection	GF - Potential Cost	See Below	See Below

Note: GF=General Fund

### ***Municipal Impact:***

<b>Municipalities</b>	<b>Effect</b>	<b>FY 24 \$</b>	<b>FY 25 \$</b>
Local and Regional School Districts	STATE MANDATE <sup>1</sup> - Cost	Potential	Potential

## ***Explanation***

The bill results in potential costs for certain school districts by establishing several requirements for the disposal of organic material (primarily food waste) in public schools, and by establishing a related voluntary pilot program.

The bill requires districts that (1) generate at least 26 tons of organic materials annually and (2) are located within 20 miles of a composting facility to separate organic materials from other solid waste and ensure that those materials are recycled at an authorized composting facility

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<sup>1</sup> State mandate is defined in Sec. 2-32b(2) of the Connecticut General Statutes, "state mandate" means any state initiated constitutional, statutory or executive action that requires a local government to establish, expand or modify its activities in such a way as to necessitate additional expenditures from local revenues.

beginning in FY 24.<sup>2</sup> It also allows districts that do not meet these thresholds to participate in a voluntary pilot program to recycle organic material in the same manner.

Districts subject to the bill's requirements, or districts that choose to participate in the voluntary pilot program, will incur costs associated with storing and transporting organic materials separately from nonorganic materials and with disposing organic materials at appropriate facilities. In districts that pay tipping fees to the waste management companies they currently use, the cost incurred by the bill may be at least partially offset by savings associated with reduced tipping fees, as organic waste will no longer be disposed of by those companies.

Current costs for solid waste disposal across ten school districts range from \$18,000 in a small district (enrollment of 452) to \$345,000 in a medium sized district (enrollment 9,800), among the 13 districts for which information is available. In most instances, these costs made up less than half of one percent of the district's annual budget. It is not known if any of these districts would meet the bill's thresholds for the requirement to separate organic and non-organic waste, rather than the option to participate in the voluntary pilot program.

The bill allows local and regional school districts to share services related to the recycling of organic materials. Any savings achieved via such service sharing agreements would at least partially offset the costs in the bill.

It is estimated that organic waste (i.e. food scraps) makes up 22% of all municipal solid waste generated annually, not specific to school districts. In FY 22, the average tip fee was \$102 per ton across all waste management facilities according to the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP).

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<sup>2</sup> Seven such facilities currently exist in the state, located in Berlin, Ellington, New Milford, North Haven, Thompson, and two in Southington.

The bill requires DEEP to administer the voluntary pilot program for organic materials composting for local and regional school districts beginning in FY 24. Any administrative cost to DEEP will depend on the scope of the program.

Lastly, the bill requires the State Department of Education (SDE) to develop guidelines in FY 24 concerning the implementation of a composting station program in schools. This has no fiscal impact, as it is anticipated that SDE can develop these guidelines with existing resources.

### ***The Out Years***

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to inflation and the volume of organic materials sent by schools to composting facilities instead of waste management companies