

The Composting Association of Vermont proposes adding references to soil in S.49, mostly in the Stormwater Management section. The reason: The problem described throughout S.49 is "stormwater." Looked at another way, the problem is how we 'mine' our soils. As water flows over and through soil its potential to disturb that soil depends on 'soil health.' That is, the soil's resiliency, its capacity to 'bounce back' after a storm event, is present and functioning. This means it is vegetated and has the essential components of organic and inorganic matter, living and non-living material. One cannot stop water from running down hill. One can protect soil quality via effective regulatory compliance: education, practice and enforcement.

This approach is also supported in forthcoming updates to the Stormwater Management Manual that will require the use of nonstructural practices such as amending soils with organic matter to improve filtration, texture, root growth, and water holding capacity. Adding one percent organic matter increases the water holding capacity of an acre by 15,000 gallons, or more.

- Page 1, line 13 & 15 reword Purpose to:  
Sec 1. PURPOSE: **IMPROVE SOIL HEALTH AND** WATER QUALITY  
"It is the purpose of this act to improve the quality of Vermont's waters **and soils**".

CAV proposes the following additions to the Stormwater Management section of S.49. Page references are from S.49 As Introduced.

- Page 2 line 12 .....and shall implement and enforce **soil health and** agricultural land use practices .....
- Page 2, line 14 These **soil health and** agricultural land use practices.....

- Page 53 (a) Findings and Intent.

**Add:** Line 2

(1) Findings. "The General Assembly finds that soil protection and management is a primary goal of state government and the citizenry. It further finds that stormwater flows represent an existing threat to the economic, societal and ecological functions of soils."

**Insert:** The General Assembly finds that **healthy soil is essential to manage stormwater**, and to reduce stream channel instability....."

- Page 53, line 8

**Insert:** **"Protect the health and function of soils, thereby** reducing the adverse effects of stormwater runoff."

- Page 59, (f) Rulemaking. line 8

**Add:** "The Secretary shall adopt rules to protect, maintain and improve the economic, societal and ecological functions of soil."

- Throughout the Stormwater Management section **add** "soils," "soil health," or " healthy soil" wherever it makes sense when the term "stormwater" is used.

- Add a definition of **Soil Health:** Soil health, also referred to as soil quality, is defined as the continued capacity of soil to function as a vital living ecosystem that sustains plants, animals, and humans.

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/soils/health/>

Thank you.

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