



ADDISON COUNTY SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

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WHITING

March 24, 2015

Tony Klein, Chairman
Vermont Statehouse
House Natural Resources & Energy Committee
115 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05633-5301

Re: Act 148 Funding

Dear Chairman Klein:

The Addison County Solid Waste Management District (ACSWMD) has supported adoption of Act 148 and continues to support its implementation. This has been a busy year for all of us as a result of its passage. In 2014, we saw the rewrite of the State Solid Waste Plan, and consequently, the rewrite of all solid waste implementation plans, material management plans and waste management ordinances to conform to the new mandates and performance standards of Act 148.

The districts and alliances have also been busy working with our member towns to identify any changes that they may have to adopt at the local level, beginning with the placement of recycling bins in public places and the introduction of variable rate pricing systems in many parts of the State. Along with other districts, the ACSWMD submitted its funding needs to the Solid Waste Infrastructure Advisory Committee (SWIAC), which just completed its final report in February. The ACSWMD hereby expresses confidence in the SWIAC recommendations, including the proposed funding mechanisms for implementation of Act 148. Specifically, the ACSWMD supports some type of service fee or bag tax that would provide more sustainable funding than the current system. Having adopted a variable rate pricing system in 1993, ACSWMD relies primarily on its District Fee (a per-ton fee on all municipal solid waste and construction & demolition debris destined for disposal) for supporting its activities and diversion programs. We do not assess per capita fees on our member towns. It is therefore important that we transition toward a more sustainable funding mechanism, one that will remain viable despite increases in diversion that are resulting in diminished trash volumes and subsequently, diminished revenues.

The VT Solid Waste District Managers' Association recently completed a Working Lands Enterprise matching grant fund project with two subcontractors – Highfields Center for Composting and Compost Technical Services - to provide statewide technical support and planning to develop composting infrastructure throughout Vermont. The project built upon the existing "Close the Loop" campaign to develop systems to recycle all of Vermont's food scraps by 2017, and supported the implementation of Act 148 by supporting sustainable farm-based composting infrastructure, using \$55,000 in grant funds and \$45,000 in matching funds, including \$17,000 of in-kind contributions by Vermont solid waste districts. The common refrain we now hear from farmers is the need for seed money to retrofit and expand their compost facilities.

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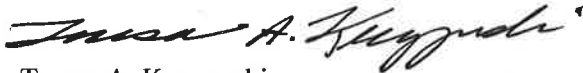
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The ACSWMD has also been busy reaching out to private companies to prepare for the influx of food scraps, including researching technologies that will maintain the quality of the compost that results from the process. We are also meeting with member towns to review their drop-off facility needs, which often include replacement of recycling containers originally purchased with State solid waste grant funds in the early 1990's. These facilities also need to prepare for collection of leaf & yard waste this year, and food scraps in 2017. Several area schools have contacted us as well to inquire about establishing food diversion programs after hearing about Act 148 in local newspapers and from our District outreach campaigns.

Overall, we have worked hard to convince the haulers, composting facilities, Board representatives and member towns to embrace Act 148 with the assurance of some funding down the line. We have provided that detailed cost information to the SWIAC, with high hopes that this was the information they needed to identify funding needs and allocate resources. Now I am beginning to witness some frustration on the part of small haulers who are willing to gear up to collect more than recyclables, but have no access to start-up grant funding or loans. I have also recently sensed some erosion in the confidence of private and public parties to invest in new facilities or equipment. They see others hesitating to invest due to a lack of funds and the calls for amendments to or delays in implementing Act 148. We cannot afford to lose momentum now. We have come so close to implementing a plan for the design of a solid waste system based on the sustainability values established by Act 148.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Yours sincerely,



Teresa A. Kuczynski
District Manager