



NORTHEAST KINGDOM WASTE MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

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House Committee on Natural Resources, Fish, & Wildlife

RE: Organics Collection & Processing

Dear Committee Members:

The Northeast Kingdom Waste Management District (NEKWMD) established a study committee in the summer of 2017 to examine Act 148 and recommend legislative changes for the current legislative session. During the process we invited and met with Representative Lefebvre and Senator Rodgers to voice our concerns and explain the uniqueness of solid waste management in our region. The result of the study committee was the language contained in S287 – a bill that was introduced early in the session and eventually combined with S285.

As it currently stands, only one provision of S287 remains in S285 – the removal of the requirement that all waste haulers provide collection of organics by July 1, 2018. It has come to our attention that even this remaining piece of S287 is being considered for change (to push the 2018 deadline to 2020).

I am writing to urge the committee to allow the hauler requirement to be abandoned altogether as was the intent of S287 and S285. While some regions of the State may be in a better position to meet this requirement, the NEK and rural Vermont are not. The NEKWMD and the hauling community have had over 5 years to work toward this goal and are no closer to achieving it than we were when Act 148 passed. This does not mean progress has not been made. The NEKWMD has been collecting and diverting organics from landfill disposal since 2007 – well before the passage of Act 148. We have a substantial network of 22 facilities currently collecting food scraps. In addition, our commercial enterprises are serviced by 3 haulers, none of which haul trash.

By forcing haulers to provide this service many of our smaller haulers will be forced out of business. The economics of hauling organics make providing the service extremely expensive for most rural areas of the State, not just the NEK. This situation is not likely to change between now and 2020. Providing a service that is not only unaffordable, but also more costly than trash disposal, will have other negative impacts on residents and businesses of rural regions of the State, and may lead to activities that jeopardize public health and safety.

A more sensible approach is to maintain the 2020 landfill ban and allow the generators and processors of organics to continue working toward the goal of diverting more organic material from landfill disposal. The infrastructure in our region has been slow to develop, but as it does it will become more affordable for those nearest the facilities. We are not asking to abandon the goal of diverting organics from landfill disposal. We are asking for a more reasoned approach that allows markets and infrastructure to dictate the pace at which it occurs. Forcing the hauling community to offer a service that is unaffordable simply does not benefit anyone.

The NEKWMD would also like to see the language regarding farms and organics management from H837 included in S285 (see below).

BILL AS INTRODUCED H.837 2018 Page 3 of 4 VT LEG #329536 v.1 1

§ 6605k. FOOD RESIDUALS; MANAGEMENT HIERARCHY

(d) As used in this section, "farm" means a parcel or parcels of land owned, leased, or managed by a person and devoted primarily to farming as that term is defined in section 6001 of this title. A farm accepting food residuals under this section shall not be required to obtain a solid waste facility certification under section 6605 of this title or a commercial hauler permit under section 6607a of this title for the purposes of managing food residuals.

The NEKWMD recognizes the difficult task before your committee in sorting through the many issues involved in this matter. We are hopeful you will consider our concerns before taking action on S285.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions regarding this correspondence.

Most sincerely,

Paul Tomasi
Executive Director