



April 4, 2019

**House Committee on Agriculture and Forestry  
RE. S. 160 An act relating to agricultural development**

Thank you for the invitation to speak to your committee today.

My name is Lisa Ransom. I own Grow Compost of Vermont with my husband Scott Baughman.

By many accounts, Vermont has developed the most comprehensive statewide food system in the country. The foundation of this system is the closed loop or full cycle nutrient management of resources as defined in the Universal Recycling Law – transitioning away from waste management toward nutrient management for the working lands of Vermont.

Recognizing the importance of the resource found in organic material is foundational in this law. My business, Grow Compost was founded on these principles of environmental protection.

Grow Compost hauls food scraps and brewing residuals throughout the state and creates compost at two sites in Vermont - Moretown and North Hartland. In addition, at our Moretown site we feed somewhere around 800 chickens.

We collect material not only for our own compost production and for our chicken flock, but we also deliver food scraps to 6 partner farms, 2 compost facilities and a handful of anaerobic digesters.

In 2018, our business managed just over 6.3 million pounds of food scraps. Over half of this volume was diverted to 6 farms that feed more than 4500 laying hens. In the full implementation of this law, we anticipate this volume to quadruple.

You will hear from farmers today of the important role this resource plays in their farm ecosystems - so I will speak to you as a manager of this valuable material. We believe that Vermont cannot afford to lose the availability of this resource on these farms or this important diversion for these resources in the state. Organics are a tricky resource - they must be managed carefully. Once loaded into a truck, these materials need to have a clear destination. The infrastructure to divert this material needs to be built with attention to local diversion as a top priority (ie. the fewer miles required to transport this material the better).

As a business owner, my priorities are on the sustainability of my business and the logistics of our environmentally driven systems. These two factors determine the viability of my business and the retention of the 15 people that we employ.

The legislature can support businesses like mine by:

- Passing consistent rules across agencies that align with the environmental values of this state
- Providing predictable oversight and compliance of those rules.

The Universal Recycling Law reflects the stewardship of the resources of Vermont. It can be supported by our ability to be nimble and responsive to meet the changing needs of the food economy as it is reflected in this law.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lisa M. Ransom". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Lisa Ransom  
Owner