

AUSTINS RUBBISH & ROLL-OFF SERVICE, INC.
P.O. BOX 159
WEST CHARLESTON, VT 05872
(802) 895-4889 OR (802) 895-4396

Chris Bray, Chair
Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Energy
Amy Sheldon, Chair
House Natural Resources Fish and Wildlife

Dear Representative Sheldon and Senator Bray,

I am submitting this letter to your two committee to express some severe concerns that we have with the timeline and the implementation of ACT 148 and the July 1st deadline on the ban of organics from the landfill and the requirement that solid waste haulers must provide collection of organics. As a solid waste hauler that has been financially strapped due to the investments we had to make to implement the curbside collection of recyclables we have no resources available to even attempt to establish another stream of material (food waste) that would have to be hauled over three hours one way for disposal. Due to the complete shutdown of our economy in light of COVID-19 things have just got a lot more unstable for solid waste haulers. Solid waste haulers have thousands of commercial accounts we have had to invest millions of dollars into infrastructure for Act 148 requirements have just been shut down, some will not reopen. Unstable is a understatement! I would ask that you delay any additional ban on organics indefinitely and that you reinstate the 20-mile radius to a facility. We also ask that you remove the requirement that haulers collect organic. You MUST take that pressure of the hauling company's! We would also ask that you allow for the disposal of recyclables in our landfill in the Northeast Kingdom which will have to happen as we encounter staffing issues due to the threat and anxiety around COVID-19. We as solid waste haulers have been deemed essential workers which is undisputed with residents and other essential businesses. Solid waste haulers must be available to collect Vermonter's waste. We also must be allowed to contain cost for our residents and create efficiency's that will help us realize these cost savings. I am sure you are aware by now that solid waste districts across the state are closing their facilities due to COVID-19. These districts are funded through a tax on trash which they use to sustain their operations. As these facilities close and districts discontinue providing essential services to Vermonter's that pressure is added to the private hauling communities. These are unprecedented times and they call for unprecedented measures. We would also ask that you would direct solid waste districts across the state to do one of two things in the communities where they have closed their operations either one- stop collecting the sur-charge on trash or two- make all money collected in those communities available to the private hauling community to help sustain operations. In the Northeast Kingdom currently the facilities that have closed are Albany, Barton, Concord, Derby, Glover, Lunenburg, Morgan, Newark, Newport Center, Newport City, Sheffield/Wheelock and Sutton, and we expect there will be more. This is

a huge problem for a solid waste hauler operating under the guidelines of ACT 148 which bans certain material. These facilities accept recycling material for free and pay for that through a tax collected on the trash. We are now seeing a drastic increase in the people that were using these facilities that are now throwing their recycling away because they do not want to pay the hauler to haul it to CSWD. The people that have been utilizing district facilities across the state are under the impression that recycling is free and we all know it is very far from that. The residents that have the impression that recycling is free are refusing to sign up for the paid service which is making them throw their recycling in the trash. Basically, our infrastructure for recycling is collapsing and we need relief from the bans so that haulers across the state are not forced to operate illegally. I am very concerned that if something drastic is not done to contain the cost of some of the policies that the legislators have implemented residents will not be able to pay the cost to comply and will be forced to illegally dump or burn their trash. Thank you for your time and consideration and I hope you all remain healthy through this time.

Sincerely

Patrick Austin, President

CC. Tim Ashe, President Pro Tempore of the Senate
Mitzi Johnson, Speaker of the House of Representatives