

Casella Testimony

Topic: House Natural Resources 2-15-2022

Time: Feb 15, 2022, 02:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Good afternoon and thank you for the opportunity to comment on H.501 as amended.

As you know, Depack facilities are a new technology in Vermont. Our company has been working hard to not only meet the requirements in Act 148 but to be forward thinkers. The Willison facility is the only facility that Casella has contemplated in Vermont.

Organics recycling is a new industry and by Vermont law we cannot dispose of these materials.

We respectfully ask that the bill be amended to allow for amendments to existing facility permits. There may be a need for certain operational changes, and this is a fully built out facility and operational already. I do not think tying the hands of ANR or our facility would provide the best outcome should an amendment be needed.

The “amendment” language should be removed from the bill. Casella has an existing permit and may at some point need to amend our permit for operational reasons. ANR has testified that this is also an important tool. We also want to say that Casella is not planning to build out a new depackaging facility in Vermont.

We support a permitting “pause” for new facilities until additional information is gathered for which we stand ready to assist with this process.

Additionally, Casella, would want a seat at the table to be a contributor to the stakeholder group.

The Report due in January 2023 report should encompass all facilities collecting food scraps, including depackaging and compost facilities. Operators need a standard with clear rules and regulations.

We are currently source separating organics at our facilities and the contamination would end up at a compost operation with the same challenges.

We would like to reiterate that “All” organic processes have contamination.

The next step in the research process that Casella is working on with UVM is a lifecycle analysis on composting vs anerobic digestion and microplastics in composting operations.

However, we all have a stake in making the end product as clean as feasibly possible. We simply ask that Casella be part of the information gathering, stakeholder group process and if needed amend the permit to make the processing better or cleaner if we deem needed.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond and I am happy to take questions.