

ARTICLE 42: Proposed Composting Rate Payer Plan

CCHS Sunrise Club (rep. Iliana Benson)
and Shelly Karlin

**Ms. Benson and Ms. Karlin move that the Town
take affirmative action on Article 42 as printed in
the Warrant.**

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Environmental Impact of Composting

Landfills lack the oxygen that compostable items need to fully decompose. This causes increased methane gas emissions, which is 84 times more effective at absorbing the sun's heat than CO₂, making it one of the most potent greenhouse gases and a huge contributor to climate change. By putting biodegradable items into the compost instead of the trash, huge amounts of waste can avoid the landfill. Another factor to consider is that MA also uses incinerators for waste disposal, and the CO₂ generated from the approximately 2,970,000 tons of waste combusted in just in 2024 (data from MassDEP 2024 Solid Waste Data Update).

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What is a rate payer system?

- Citizens can opt into the plan, same as recycling and trash, through the town website.
- We are asking the town to consider negotiating with composting company vendors so that the entire town has lower rates to pay compared to subscribing to composting as a singular household/commercial site.
- The composting company would have pre-existing infrastructure and resources to deal with the compost. Essentially, we would be outsourcing the composting process but making it easier to access for the entire community.

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How it fits into Climate Action and Resilience Plan

Sustainable Concord is a plan designed to prioritize actionable solutions for both reducing greenhouse gas emissions while improving our community's resilience to the impacts of climate change.

- Current average household organic waste generation is 8lbs/week. Without composting, this is equivalent to creating 4,298 tons of CO₂ per year.
- Direct and actionable way to lessen the impact of greenhouse gas emissions
- A priority action in the CARP is to "Create opportunities town wide to increase the waste diversion rate by 30%."

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Final 2030 Solid Waste Master Plan by MassDEP

Goals to reduce disposal statewide by 30 percent (from 5.7 million tons in 2018 to 4 million tons in 2030) over the next decade. Long-term goal of achieving a 90 percent reduction in disposal to 570,000 tons by 2050. **All in-state landfill sites are projected to be at capacity by 2030 - including incinerator ash landfills.**

Separate food waste disposal needs to be incorporated into the town's waste management plan in consideration of future monetary and environmental costs.

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Final 2030 Solid Waste Master Plan by MassDEP Takeaways

Commercial organic waste over ½ ton per week was banned, effective November 1, 2022, and MassDEP is considering implementing a 100% ban by 2030.

Concord's commercial organic waste producers **must** develop composting or alternative plans by 2030. That means that nearly all restaurants in Concord **will** be using composting, if they are not already. If the town does the ratepayer system, it allows the town to help local businesses financially and support them in going green.

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Mass DEP Recycling IQ Kit Case Study Report

- Statewide, **89 municipalities in Massachusetts have a residential food waste collection program**, diverting over 20,000 tons of food scraps from the waste stream in 2023.
- Curbside food waste collection programs are growing in Massachusetts. **Twelve communities have a municipally supported curbside program**, where residents put their food scraps in a separate bin, to be picked up curbside along with their trash, or by a separate hauler. Some municipalities support these programs by providing free curbside food waste containers or kitchen counter bins or fully fund the program.

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MassDEP's Sustainable Materials Recovery Program (SMRP) has awarded \$350K in grants to municipalities over the past 10 years to start or expand upon their own curbside collection program or residential food waste diversion programs. Municipalities can use grant funds to purchase residential curbside food waste carts, or kitchen counter food scrap bins, or help with outreach and education.

MassDEP manages **Statewide Contract FAC113**, which includes recycling containers, compost bins and rain barrels, curbside wheeled carts for organic and food waste material, kitchen counter buckets and backyard compost bins. **Municipalities can procure items directly from this contract without bidding publicly.**

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Neighboring Towns

Town	Curbside Composting	Drop-off program	Composting Facility in-town	Received grants
Newton	✓	✓		✓
Watertown	✓	✓		Unknown
Lexington	✓	✓	✓	Unknown
Bedford	✓	✓		✓

Bedford's Ex. (1)

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The town-wide program is a public-private partnership, where the resident signs up on Black Earth's website for service. Once a registration is received, DPW receives a confirmation email and we deliver the starter kit. Black Earth then handles all the customer service functions, including missed pickups, with the exception of cart maintenance, which DPW manages directly. Residents call us for broken bins.

-Elizabeth Antanavica, DPW Business Manager Bedford

Bedford Ex. (2)

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Our contract with Black Earth was procured through an open, competitive Request for Proposals or RFP. [...] rates cannot increase during the life of the contract and our density discount threshold is also held firm. The contract itself only obligates the Town to provide the starter kit (approx. \$47/HH in Bedford's case before grant reimbursement).

The utility credit is a unique feature to our program. Because our grant funding provides \$10 in start up costs, we elected to apply those directly to the water bills of participating residents.

-Elizabeth Antanavica, DPW Business Manager Bedford

Potential Resources Needed (1)

Starter kit management:

In Arlington, you pick up starter kit from town hall (saves resources from delivery). We may require a place to keep supplies and volunteers for handing them out monthly, or we can request that a composting company to handles this.

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Potential Resources Needed (2)

Organize a request for proposals (RFP) from composting companies and negotiate a contract with a composting company regarding terms for a rate payer system in Concord

We recognize that the Concord Department of Public Works has many ongoing projects, and are grateful for the work already being done to protect the environment. We believe that this can be undertaken with minimal resources supplied and have a huge impact on doing everything we can to help the environment.

Possible Composting Vendors

- Black Earth has already shown that they have the infrastructure and the interest in expanding (Bedford, Arlington, Watertown)
- City Compost
- Cero Cooperative (commercial only)

SMRP Municipal Grants

The Sustainable Materials Recovery Program (SMRP) is offering various grants this spring intended to support local recycling, composting, reuse, and related programs.

- [How to Apply to an SMRP Grant](#)

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How do we spread the word to sign up?

- Flyers
- Canvassing/door to door (done by volunteers/Sunrise Club)
- Town website page
- Word of mouth by neighbors (Bedford group said this is what works best)
- Ask for support from local climate organizations to spread the word

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Thank you for your time!

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