



Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation
Waste Management & Prevention Division, Solid Waste Program
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Role of Depackagers in Managing Food Scraps Stakeholder Group Meeting #7
Held on December 6, 2022 at National Life, Davis 2, Montpelier, Vermont with a virtual Teams video option.

Main Group Participants as Outlined in Act 170:

Michael Casella	Casella Waste Systems
Billy Connelly	Vanguard Renewables
Jenna Evans	Ben and Jerry's
Tom Gilbert	Black Dirt Farm
Dan Goossen	Green Mountain Compost
Erin Sigrist	VT Retailers and Grocers Association

Other Group Participants:

John Fay	Windham Solid Waste Management District
Emily Johnston	Addison County Solid Waste District
Shannon Choquette	Northeast Kingdom Waste Mgmt. District Christine Beling EPA
Natasha Duarte	Compost Association of Vermont
Chris Rice	MMR
Susan Alexander	Lamoille Regional Solid Waste Management District
Emma Shouldice	Shouldice and Associates
John Brabant	VTers for a Clean Environment

ANR Participants:

Ben Gauthier	VT ANR – Solid Waste Management Program
Josh Kelly	VT ANR – Solid Waste Management Program
Dennis Fekert	VT ANR – Solid Waste Management Program

Main Topics: Food Recovery Management Hierarchy & Source Separation

Discussion with main group participants offering their recommendations on each of the following statutory charges:

- “(1) recommendations on whether the organics management hierarchy in 10 V.S.A. § 6605k should apply to each generator of organic waste.*
- (2) whether the Agency of Natural Resources should modify its [existing policy](#) surrounding the source separation of organic wastes;*
- (3) any recommendations on the proper use of depackagers in the management of organic waste.”*

Josh Kelly offered a recap from the last meeting and review of the main charge of the group- [refer to language on top of agenda.]

Group Discussion on the Hierarchy: Billy is concerned that the VT food recovery hierarchy is not backed up by scientific data and a comprehensive analysis of impacts and asked why VT does not use the EPA hierarchy since we typically look to EPA for expertise on environmental issues. Tom mentioned that decentralized infrastructure is the best way to mitigate impacts from trucking, and we don't necessarily need data to understand that trucking heavy, wet organics longer distances has greater environmental impact.

Mike reiterated his preference that ANR approach the hierarchy mainly with education and outreach versus enforcement. Tom mentioned that having the laws in place to clarify and to be enforced if needed would backstop the education and outreach. He also said that having a clearly defined hierarchy promotes investment in infrastructure. Enforcement is secondary.

Erin stated that she is hearing from her constituents that there is a lack of clarity on how they should be implementing the hierarchy principles in their businesses.

Group Discussion on ANR's Organics Management Policy: Tom expressed that he preferred to see ANR come up with an overarching policy and create exemptions from that rather than having two competing policies. He went on to say that source separation preserves all options on the hierarchy while doing the most to mitigate contamination. Mike mentioned clarity on what is and is not accepted for haulers and facilities would be helpful. Dan stated facilities that accept commingled material want the policy to remain the same and the facilities that accept clean source separated food residuals likely want it to be revised. He asked if there was consensus in the group that maintaining separate streams for clean source separated food and packaged food kept the most options on the table in terms of management of the materials.

There was a brief internet failure at National Life, so the in-person participants dropped out of the meeting briefly while the wifi was restored.

Group Discussion on Areas of Agreement:

- “would we all agree that there is a place within the entire organics management system for depackaging?” (1:39:30 in video) Unanimous consensus.
- “can we agree that there should be some constraints on the application of depackaging such that unpackaged organic materials and packaged organic materials are not co-mingled?” Not complete agreement
- “I think there's agreement that everyone would like more scientific study” (1:45:00 in video) Unanimous consensus.

Some of the other scientific study areas discussed could be:

- Effects of PFAS and microplastics on human health and the environment
 - Understanding existing background concentrations of PFAS & MP in the state.
 - Looking at what other states are doing – Maine for a different approach and cutting things off at the source.
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Next Steps

Stakeholders agreed to get preliminary written comments to ANR by noon on Monday December 12th so that a draft report can be prepared.

Stakeholders expected to need to discuss the draft report once it had been prepared. Erin suggested a 45-minute call as an opportunity for stakeholder dialogue.
