AB 1201

Public Workshop: Organic Waste Bifurcation Feasibility Determination

November 1, 2023

Welcome and Introductory Remarks

Rachel Machi Wagoner

Director, CalRecycle

Agenda

AB 1201 Organic Waste Bifurcation Feasibility Determination
Tim Hall, Senior Environmental Scientist

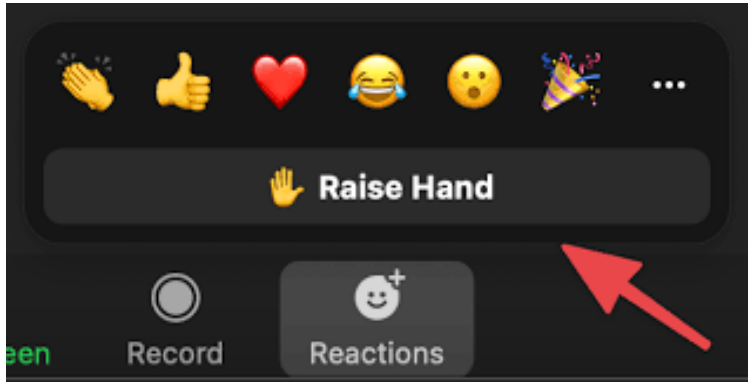
USDA's National Organic Program Overview
Kristen Pidcock, Environmental Scientist

Overview of Composter Survey Results
Mia Kawamoto, Environmental Scientist

Discussion and Feedback from Interested Parties
Moderated by Tim Hall

Submitting Questions and Feedback

- To make a comment **in-person**, please line up at the podium.
- To make an **oral comment via Zoom**, please raise your hand and the host will unmute you.



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AB 1201 Legislation Requirements

Products labeled “compostable” must be an allowable compost feedstock under USDA’s NOP program.

AB 1201 Legislation Requirements

CalRecycle must determine if bifurcated collection is feasible and would enable processing that can be done efficiently to recover organic waste in both streams

Organic Waste Bifurcation Feasibility Determination

Recovery, not Disposal

Feasibility requires that products labeled "compostable" that are not suitable as compost feedstocks for use in organic agriculture will be **recovered**, not disposed.

USDA's National Organic Program Overview

- Purpose
  - Consistent national standards for organically produced agricultural products sold in the United States

- National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances
  - Identifies substances that may and may not be used in organic crop and livestock production
  - **Includes all materials that may be used as compost feedstocks**

USDA's National Organic Program Overview (Cont.)

- NOP Defines "Synthetic Substances"
  - "a substance that is formulated or manufactured by a chemical process or by a process that chemically changes a substance extracted from naturally occurring plant, animal, or mineral sources, except that such term shall not apply to substances created by naturally occurring biological processes."
- Petitions may be submitted to the National Organic Standards Board requesting it to recommend to USDA that synthetic materials be allowed.

USDA's National Organic Program Overview (Cont.)

- Newspapers or other recycled paper are the only synthetic materials allowed

- For example, the following are not allowed:
  - Glossy paper
  - Colored ink
  - Plastic-containing products

Overview of Composter Survey Results

Composter Survey

- Survey conducted June 2023
- Surveyed all 34 mixed material composting facilities in CA
- 24 facilities responded (70% response rate)
- Asked questions about plastic and paper products that are accepted and incorporated into finished compost

Overview of Composter Survey Results (Cont.)

Results Summary

1. Most respondents accept and process uncoated paper products into finished compost
2. While a few respondents accept plastic or plastic-containing materials, none of them incorporate these materials into finished compost
3. Feedstock contamination continues to be the most common concern for composting facilities that accept food waste
4. Adding infrastructure to process a separate stream would be expensive and difficult for composting facilities. The majority of facilities stated that they could not feasibly process the separate stream

Overview of Composter Survey Results (Cont.)

Paper and fiber materials accepted and composted by facilities	Percentage of Respondents
Uncoated paper/paperboard	83%
Bamboo fiber	29%
Wax-lined paper/paperboard - e.g., hot or cold cups	21%
Sugarcane/bagasse fiber	17%
Clay-coated paper/paperboard - e.g., cereal boxes	13%

Overview of Composter Survey Results (Cont.)

Top concerns related to accepting plastic and plastic-containing materials	Listed as a concern	Listed as the top concern
"Physical contaminants affect quality/marketability."	54%	33%
"Losing compost product certifications (OIM or OMRI) and resulting impacts on marketability."	38%	21%
"Certified compostable plastics are indistinguishable from traditional fossil-based plastics."	38%	0%
"Certified compostable plastics do not biodegrade in the timeframe required by the facility."	25%	8%

Overview of Composter Survey Results (Cont.)

Current capacity to remove contamination

Contamination Removal Method	Before Composting	During Composting	After Composting
Reject incoming loads to avoid excessive contamination	79%	-	-
Manual Sorting	70%	33%	13%
Mechanical Sorting	38%	-	75%
De-Packaging Equipment	25%	-	-

Overview of Composter Survey Results (Cont.)

- Would it be feasible to process two separate organic waste streams?
  - NO: 63%
  - YES: 25%
  - YES, but expensive and contamination concerns: 12%

- 79% stated that adding a separate stream would increase operational costs by more than 20%

Conclusions From the Composter Survey

1. While markets clearly exist for compost that incorporates uncoated paper and paperboard products, it is not clear that there is a market for compost that intentionally incorporates plastic or plastic-containing products.
2. Composting facilities have already made significant investments in operational capacity and labor to implement SB 1383. Adding another organic stream for them to process will significantly increase the amount of additional investment needed.
3. Bifurcated collection of products would not enable the current solid waste processing infrastructure to efficiently process and recover products that are not allowable compost inputs under the NOP.

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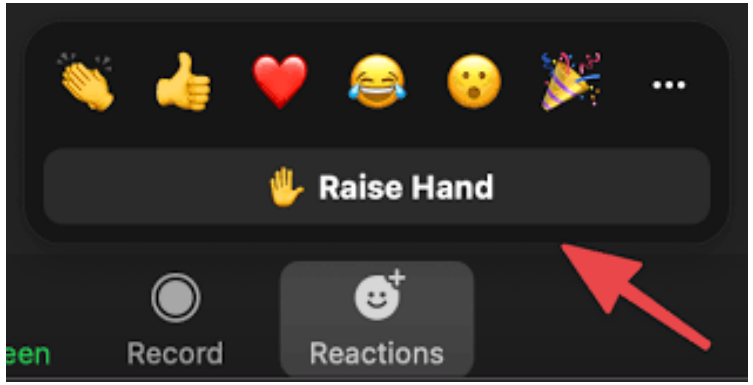

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