



King County

Dow Constantine

King County Executive

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September 7, 2022

The Honorable Claudia Balducci
Chair, King County Council
Room 1200
C O U R T H O U S E

Dear Councilmember Balducci:

This letter transmits a proposed Ordinance that, if enacted, would fulfill the requirement of the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 49.19A, where cities and counties with more than 25,000 residents must adopt a compost procurement ordinance. This law requires that local jurisdictions pass a Compost Procurement Ordinance and plan for the use of compost in several operational and capital project categories.

The compost procurement ordinance called for by the RCW would plan for the use of compost in projects such as landscaping, construction and postconstruction soil amendments; applications to prevent erosion, filter stormwater runoff, promote vegetation growth, or improve the stability and longevity of roadways; and low-impact development and green infrastructure to filter pollutants or keep water on-site, or both. This work is already happening through the CompostWise program at King County, and this proposed Ordinance would reaffirm King County's commitment to developing end markets for organics.

King County participates in a robust organics recycling program that collects food and yard waste from 39 cities and unincorporated areas of the county. This valuable resource is then transformed into a nutrient-rich soil amendment. This system produces 350,000 tons of market-ready compost annually through private-sector processors. The product is sold back into the community, supporting local food production and closing the loop on the waste stream. Beyond overseeing and coordinating the collection and supporting the processing of the food and yard waste, the Solid Waste Division (SWD) also bolsters end markets for the organic material diverted from the county's Cedar Hills Regional Landfill (CHRLF).

In 2021, King County participated in the Washington State Organics Management to Reduce Methane and Climate Change Workgroup, which gathered organics experts' input to inform future legislation being drafted by legislative staff. The input from this workgroup was then developed into HB 1799, a comprehensive organics law that includes many targets, requirements, and funding support for the prevention and diversion of organic waste.

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The proposed legislation furthers the King County Strategic Plan goal of efficient, accountable regional and local government by aligning funding, policy, and operational goals with community priorities, such as Re+ (zero waste of resources). The proposed legislation supports the goal to achieve zero waste of resources by 2030 outlined in King County Code 10.14.020. In addition, the proposed legislation supports the goals in the Strategic Climate Action Plan related to energy and preparation for climate change by advancing towards the goal of zero waste of resources through actions to increase recycling of food waste and organics, and further improving landfill gas collection at the CHRLF.

Implementation of this proposed Ordinance is expected to have no fiscal impact to the County, as reflected in the enclosed fiscal note. The State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) process is underway for this proposed Ordinance.

Thank you for your consideration of this proposed Ordinance. This important legislation would enable King County to continue to provide essential, safe, reliable, efficient, and environmentally sustainable solid waste transfer, recycling, and disposal services to the community, and help the county continue to move toward zero waste of resources.

If your staff have any questions, please contact Pat D. McLaughlin, Division Director of the Solid Waste Division of the Department of Natural Resources and Parks, at 206-477-4501.

Sincerely,

 for

Dow Constantine
King County Executive

Enclosure

cc: King County Councilmembers

ATTN: Stephanie Cirkovich, Chief of Staff
Melani Pedroza, Clerk of the Council

Shannon Braddock, Chief of Staff, Office of the Executive

Karan Gill, Deputy Chief of Staff, Office of the Executive

Mina Hashemi, Council Relations Director, Office of the Executive

Christie True, Director, Department of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP)

Pat D. McLaughlin, Division Director, Solid Waste Division, DNRP