

March 2, 2015

Jeanine Townsend, Clerk to the Board
State Water Resources Control Board
1001 I Street, 24th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: General Waste Discharge Requirements for Composting Operations– Comments on Draft EIR

Dear Ms. Townsend:

The California Organics Recycling Council (CORC) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the CEQA Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and regulatory language for the proposed General Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs) for Composting Operations (Draft Order WQ-2015-XXXX-DWQ). CORC supports the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) in its efforts to protect water quality throughout the California. CORC appreciates the difficulty in crafting these regulations regarding composting operations amid the changing nature of organic waste handling throughout California, as well as safely and cost-effectively enable the needed growth in diversion of this waste stream to meet CalRecycle's 75% Initiative, Strategic Directive 6.1, and other sustainability goals of the state. CORC is a non-profit organization consisting of industry, government, and other stakeholders who have interest in removing organics from landfills and put to their highest and best use towards sustainable goals. We will limit our comments three main issues of import to our members, the economic analysis, the exemption of chipping and grinding facilities, and the definition of food material.

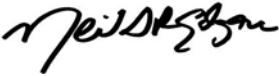
CORC believes that the Economic Considerations contained within the EIR minimizes the likely financial impact on the composting industry in several ways. It assumes that there will be no economic impact due to construction of operating pads due to these new standards. It fails to discuss the costs of wastewater treatment and/or disposal. the calculations for pond sizing in the economic analysis appear to use "average" rainfall amounts, not the 25 year annual return values required to be installed, significantly underestimating the per facility cost of pond installation.

CORC believes that chipping and grinding facilities and operations should not be exempted from coverage under these WDRs, as they are no more unlikely to degrade water quality than composting operations, with their operational characteristics being nearly identical. Chipping and grinding facilities are an integral part of nearly all composting operations, managing the same green materials. We believe this exemption is based on a flawed assumption regarding chipping/grinding operations that materials are transient, and therefore do not represent a consistent potential source of contaminants. While materials are required to be removed from the site within 48 hours (or up to 7 days with LEA approval) chipping and grinding facilities are nearly always the custodians of feedstock piles of green materials, either before or after processing; the sites are rarely devoid of stockpiles. A significant proportion of green materials processed at chipping and grinding facilities are subsequently delivered to land application sites with little or no regulation. Land application continues to undermine potential feedstock sources for the organics processing industry, while increasing the potential for spreading pathogens, physical contamination, and invasive pests throughout the state.

CORC believes that the latest, revised definition of food material requires additional work. The definition of “Food Material”, on page A-4, provides little clarification as to the allowance of food-soiled paper/packaging and other potential non-food materials from food processing waste (i.e. expired, packaged food products), wet/dry collection (or other commingled) systems, MRF residuals, residential co-collection of food material and green material, or other collection programs where food material may not be “separated from solid waste to the **maximum extent POSSIBLE** (emphasis added) at the point of generation”. As written, the phrase “to the maximum extent possible” appears to be highly subjective and could preclude many compost facilities from coverage under these WDRs, given the need of the composting industry to provide growing food material capacity in the next few years. Additionally, given stated goals of achieving significant coverage for composting facilities under this order, we recommend that the food material definition be revised to be consistent with Title 14 and remove this contradictory language.

CORC has a long-standing commitment to environmental protection and organics recycling. The continued success of organics recycling programs is dependent on achievable standards which protect public health, safety, and the environment while enabling operators to succeed in a highly-competitive market.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Neil Edgar". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Neil" being more prominent than the last name "Edgar".

Neil Edgar
Chair, Policy Committee