

For SNACT

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## **New CT Law Requires Some Schools to Collect Food Scraps for Composting**

In the 2024 legislative session, [Public Act 24-45](#), Sec. 6(a)(5) added K-12 schools to the Commercial Organics Recycling Law (CGS Section 22a-226e). This law requires each K-12 public or non-public school building or educational facility to collect Source Separated Organic Materials (SSOM), such as food scraps, for composting if the school building generates twenty-six tons or more per year *and* is within 20 miles of an authorized SSOM composting facility. This requirement goes into effect July 1, 2026.

CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) is scheduling meetings, presentations and webinars to ensure that school associations, principals, superintendents, food and nutrition directors and others are informed of this new law. Initial question that all schools have is how to determine if they are triggered by the law. Second round of questions is how to set up programs if they are triggered by the law.

CT's Commercial Organics Recycling Law was passed in 2011, requiring commercial businesses, such as food wholesalers, industrial food manufacturers, supermarkets and conference centers, to collect their food scraps to be processed at an authorized facility starting January 1, 2014. At that point, businesses triggered the law if they generated 104 tons or more. By January 1, 2020, that number reduced to 52 tons, and as of January 1, 2022, it was reduced again to 26 tons.

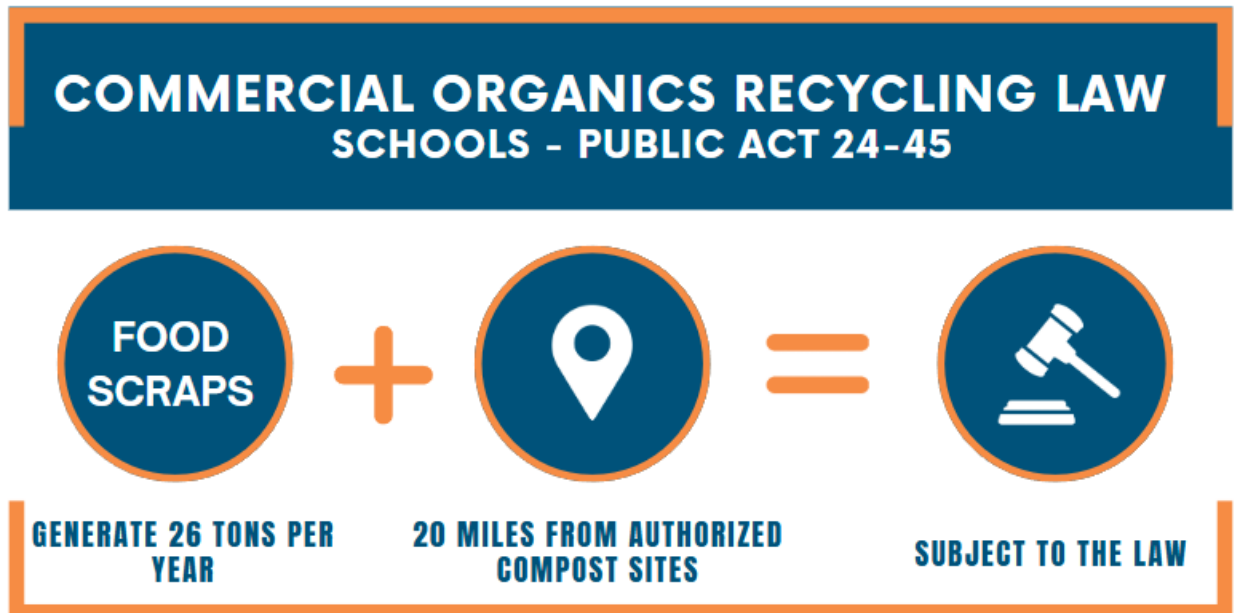
When the law first went into effect, businesses were not triggered unless they generated a certain tonnage *and* were within 20 miles of authorized facility. In 2023, the mileage requirement was removed; all commercial businesses listed in the law that generate 26 tons or more annually are now subject to the law.

In 2024, [Public Act 24-45](#) (An Act Concerning Education Mandate, Relief, School Discipline and Disconnected Youth) included a section calling out schools to be part of the CT Commercial Organics Recycling Law:

*Sec. 6(a)(5) On and after July 1, 2026, each public or nonpublic school building or educational facility in which students in grades kindergarten to twelve, inclusive, or any combination thereof, are enrolled, that is located not more than twenty miles from either an authorized source separated organic material composting facility and that generates an average projected volume of not less than twenty-six tons per year of source-separated organic materials shall:*

*Separate such source separated organic materials from other solid waste;*

*and ensure that such source-separated organic materials are recycled at any authorized source-separated organic material composting facility that has available capacity and that will accept such source-separated organic material.*



### **How do Schools Determine if they are Triggered by the Law?**

DEEP has a map of authorized facilities that process food scraps through aerobic composting or anaerobic digestion followed by aerobic composting. The [Food Residual Recycling](#) map provides a 20-mile radius around all the authorized facilities. A search tool, found in the upper left-hand corner of the screen, is where the school address can be entered. The school will appear as a yellow dot and if it is located within the radius of a facility (represented by yellow and blue circles), then your school is subject to this aspect of the law.

A second aspect of the law is the amount of food scraps the school generates. The best way to figure out if your school generates 26 tons or more of food scraps is to conduct a waste audit. Note, the law is about all food scraps the school generates, not just the cafeteria. An audit should include food scraps from the cafeteria, the kitchen, classrooms if breakfast or snacks are eaten there, teacher's lounge, and culinary kitchens for example.

The Center for EcoTechnology (CET) has a [Food Waste Estimation Guidance](#) that helps schools estimate the amount of food waste generated during lunch for elementary, middle and high schools. The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) [Food Waste Warriors](#) report provides an estimated average of breakfast waste generated per student, which is based on data collected from schools that conducted waste audits. Note, these tools provide only rough estimates.

DEEP's first upcoming online seminar, *Composting with School Recycling and Composting Laws in CT* will cover all questions about the law and how to determine if your schools are triggered by the law, including estimating food waste using the CET and WWF calculator and the map tool.

***Complying with School Recycling and Composting Laws in CT***

**March 17, 2025 - 3:30pm - 4:30pm**

[Register Here](#)

DEEP's second upcoming online seminar, *School Recycling: Sharing Tables, Donating Surplus and Collecting Food Scraps* will share how different schools have implemented these types of programs.

***School Recycling: Sharing Tables, Donating Surplus and Collecting Food Scraps***

**April 14, 2025 - 3:30pm - 5:00pm**

[Register Here](#)

DEEP will be recording these sessions, and links to recordings will be shared to all who register for the upcoming webinars. If more information is needed, please reach out to Sherill Baldwin at [sherill.baldwin@ct.gov](mailto:sherill.baldwin@ct.gov).