# US Composting Council 2025 Public Policy Report

US Composting Council®

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## Introduction and Purpose

The US Composting Council, chartered in 1990 as the organization focused on the success of producing compost derived from source-separated feedstocks, has a Public Policy program that prioritizes:

- Common-sense regulations for compost facilities and compost use
- Securing seed funding to grow infrastructure that will grow the industry by 300-500 food-waste accepting compost facilities in the next five years to recover the amount of inedible food now going to disposal
- Prioritizing wide-scale use of compost in agriculture by working through policy to increase its usage
- Professional operation of compost facilities through regulatory requirements for training and certification
- Science-based policy, especially in areas of inerts, compostable packaging, and emerging contaminants
- Investment equal to similar industries for development of compost production (equipment, land, etc.)
- Requiring use of compost as a beneficial additive in markets such as land development, road construction, and stormwater infrastructure
- Banning landfilling of organic waste as a methane contributor to climate change and prioritizing the EPA Food Waste Scale

Through its legislative arm, the Legislative and Environmental Affairs Committee of the USCC develops and supports policy actions (bills, regulation requests), and participates in coalitions with similar goals. See the committee charter here.

This Annual Report is a snapshot of legislative and regulatory activity in the previous "legislative" year, defined primarily by the prevalence of state legislature timelines (ending in June each year). There is a growing amount of federal activity, investment and discussion of

organics recycling and composting, but the majority of policy initiatives are catalyzed by state level action.

## 2024-25 Overarching Themes

With the 2024 Presidential Election bringing a new Administration, the compost industry and related environmental causes have incurred considerable losses in financial support and focus at the federal level. Activity continues to be more robust in state legislatures than in Congress, due to the level of partisanship experienced at the national level. Neither the Compost Act nor the earmarking of the Compost Act into the Farm Bill has succeeded to date.

The federal government was funded through a Continuing Resolution that runs through September 20, 2025. At the time this report was published, the government is in a shutdown mode since funding ran out. Focus on other issues Congress under this administration has also impacted the ability for the compost industry to reestablish the Compost Caucus in the House of Representatives (originally formed in spring of 2024) in this session. This has also impacted the opportunity to educate and inform Congressional staff and Members of Congress.

1. The federal level is a nexus of action for PerfluoroAlkyl Substances (PFAS/PFOAS)' impact on liability and research funding in the industry, with continued lobbying of members of the House and Senate Committees with jurisdiction by USCC to pass a bill exempting the industry from liability under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act(CERCLA). The Senate bill has not passed to date.
2. The USCC has been an active member of the PFAS Passive Receivers Coalition, whose members include all the major public and private sector entities in the solid waste, water, wastewater, recycling, and municipal industry. The PFAS Passive Receivers Coalition held a Congressional Briefing at the Capitol on June 18, 2025 that representatives of the USCC attended and participated in. Following are the links to the Congressional Briefing Agenda and Summary Handout: PFAS Congressional Briefing Agenda & PFAS Congressional Briefing Summary Handout.
3. At the State level, 12 states proposed a total of 21 bills in 2025 regarding PFAS contamination in biosolids. Bills in Oregon, Rhode Island, Virginia, and Washington were passed that either set new monitoring requirements or initiated studies into the prevalence of PFAS in sewage sludge. The USCC has supported bills calling for additional study and has opposed bills that would ban the land application or composting of biosolids, especially bills setting standards without credible science behind the numbers.
4. In 2025, the landscape of U.S. State EPR laws continued to expand with new legislation in Maryland (SB 901) and Washington (SB 5284), making them the 6th and 7th states to adopt packaging EPR, alongside new needs assessment laws in Hawaii and Rhode Island. While Colorado and Oregon already had compliance deadlines and fee obligations in effect, many other states like Minnesota and Maine were implementing programs, with Maine initiating its Request for Proposal (RFP) process and Minnesota registering producers through the Circular Action Alliance.

5. Only one state, Maine LD 1065 passed a statewide organic waste ban in 2025. It will be phased in, starting in 2030. It will require large generators of food scraps near recycling facilities to divert their waste from landfills.
6. New Hampshire's statewide organic waste ban passed in 2024, and went into effect in February 2025. It prohibits entities that produce one or more tons of food waste per week from sending it to landfills, provided a composting or anaerobic digestion facility is available nearby.
7. Connecticut expanded the scope of its existing organic waste ban in January 2025 to include public and private institutions, such as schools and healthcare facilities, that generate a significant amount of organic waste.
8. Washington's commercial organic waste ban entered its second phase in January 2025, expanding the number of businesses required to comply.
9. Labeling bills have been introduced in many statehouses–most focused only on conventional recycling with requests by USCC and industry allies to expand to compostable packaging—but none passed last year, with the exception of a broad organics-focused bill in Washington state that added enforcement to its already enacted labeling bill.

   For 2024-25, movement for a national bill around recyclable and compostable labeling is gaining, but the bills need more specific language around issues for compostable packaging labeling. Organics bans in Arizona and Illinois are already being discussed; and rural areas of California are pressing for exception to the state's overarching organics collection requirements.

## Federal Initiatives

### The Compost Act

This bill, in its fourth round of introduction, would bring millions in funding for compost infrastructure grants and loans and make permanent NRCS336, a conservation practice that funds use of compost by farmers for carbon sequestration purposes. The bill currently has two cosponsors in the House; and has not been introduced in the Senate. When Congress begins to move the Appropriations Bill for the USDA, USCCwill work to include provisions of the Compost Act into the Appropriations Bill.
HR3272
Summary Sheet

### The Recycling and Composting Accountability Act

This bill, in its third round of introduction, has been introduced in the House and has five cosponsors. It has not been introduced in the Senate. It would task the U.S. EPA with collecting data from all states on recycling and composting infrastructure, programs, markets, and other key information. The USCC is strongly in favor of this bill due to the need for standardized national composting data.
HR 4109
Summary Sheet

## Farm Bill

The Federal Farm Bill, which funds the Natural Resource Conservation Service, food programs, agricultural subsidies, and a host of other initiatives within the U.S. Department of Agriculture, is renewed every three years. Originally planned for renewal by 2024, the funding in the current bill has been extended to September 30, 2025.

USCC will continue to work with a coalition of partners to request federal research funding for scientific analysis of possible Perfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) transfer from compost into plants (included in Senate version); and increased funding for the Urban Agriculture Office. USCC Farm Bill Position

## Compost Caucus

The USCC staff and its Washington lobbyist are monitoring the Congressional schedules and awaiting the best time to approach the previous members to restart the Compost Caucus. Thus far, staff have indicated other priorities are taking precedence over restarting the coalition.

## Perfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS):

USCC has conducted a lengthy campaign to inform Congress (primarily the Environmental and Public Works Committee and House Energy and Commerce Committee) to inform legislators of the need to exempt compost producers from liability as passive receivers of PFAS under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA-aka Superfund). Briefings on a bill introduced by Senator Cynthia Lummis (R-WY) have been held for staff of both committees in the last Congress. During the current Congress, a hearing was held by the Senate EPW committee to discuss liability; the bill is not expected to move this year. There is no companion House bill. With our chapter and member representatives, we met about these issues with Missouri and Tennessee Senate staff and directly with Sen. Boozman of Arkansas in the 4th quarter of 2024..

In December 2024, USCC met with the U.S. EPA's enforcement division to request inclusion for compost manufacturers under the agency's enforcement discretion; informal indications were that prosecution of the compost industry is not the intent of the agency's enforcement unless a specific release of PFAS is made by a manufacturer. An official discretion memo was issued in April 2024 and composting was *not* named as a specific discretion industry; wastewater (biosolid-producing) public facilities were named for discretionary authority.

On September 18, 2025 the U.S. EPA said it will maintain and defend the rule established in the Biden Administration designating certain PFAS as hazardous substances under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act

The hazardous substance designation for two types of PFAS — PFOS and PFOA — was first set last year under the Biden administration. The National Waste & Recycling Association and other groups sued the EPA in 2024 over the designation, saying it unfairly exposes them to liability expenses because they are "passive receivers" that do not have control over PFAS-laden materials that enter their facilities.

The EPA also said it intends to develop new rules on how it might craft any future hazardous substance designations under CERCLA, including cost considerations. “The best, most enduring solution to this issue is a statutory fix to protect passive receivers from liability, which EPA would follow to the letter of the law,” the agency said.

USCC will continue to push for specific legislation or the inclusion of compost manufacturers as a named enforcement discretion industry. Further, USCC will continue to push for what it deems the most effective solution: Total ban on PFAS chemicals in consumer products that end up polluting the wastewater stream and feedstocks collected for composting.

Lummis Bill
USCC PFAS in Compost Factsheet
USCC Website

### No Time to Waste Act (S1385 and HR2883)

HR2883 S1395 USCC continues to work with the staff of Sen. Chris Coons (D-DE) to provide comments on and support this bill, aimed at reduction of food waste to increase food security, foster productivity, promote resource and energy conservation, and address climate change. It also includes composting in grants and consumer education

### Reduce Food Loss and Waste Act (S3146):

S835 This bill, S835, was introduced by Sen. Dick Durbin (D-IL) with one cosponsor and is a voluntary food waste certification bill, that includes composting as one of the preferred paths for inedible food waste. USCC is supporting.

### Steward Act of 2025

S351 This bill, S351, was introduced by Sen. Shelley Moore Capito with two cosponsors. The bill would require EPA to carry out certain activities to collect and disseminate data on recycling and composting programs in the United States.

### Lower Cost for Everyday Americans Act

HR1768 This bill, HR 1768, was introduced by Rep. Frank Pallone with no cosponsors. The bill would require EPA to carry out certain activities to collect and disseminate data on recycling and composting programs and their end markets in the United States.

### Agriculture Resilience Act of 2025

HR 3077 / S1507
These bills, HR3077 and S1507, were introduced in the House by Rep. Chellie Pingree with 20 co-sponsors, and the Senate by Sen. Martin Heinrich with 11 cosponsors. The bills require that USDA finalize and implement a plan to achieve net-zero emissions from the sector by 2040. USDA must periodically review and revise the plan, as necessary, and annually report on its implementation.

Additionally, the bills expand the scope of various USDA research, extension, and education programs; conservation programs; and livestock programs to incorporate climate change mitigation and adaptation. Expanded activities include efforts to improve soil health and preserve farmland and grassland.

The bills change programs that support renewable energy in rural areas to address carbon emissions in the agricultural sector. Among these changes, the bill provides statutory authority for the AgSTAR program for reducing methane emissions from livestock waste and requires the program to be moved from the U.S. EPA to USDA.

The bills also address food waste, for example, by (1) standardizing the voluntary labels used by food producers to indicate the date by which food should be used or discarded, and (2) making composting activities eligible for support through USDA conservation programs. Moreover, the bills establishe grants to reduce and prevent food waste in landfills and in schools.

### Research for Healthy Soils Act

HR3991 This bill was introduced by Rep. Marie Gluesenkamp Perez with two cosponsors. The bill requires research on microplastics and Per-and Polyfluoroalkyl substances on farmlands.

## Federal Regulatory Strategies

### Food Loss and Waste Strategy

On June 12, 2024, the White House, along with the U.S.  EPA, the USDA, and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration released the "National Strategy for Reducing Food Loss and Waste and Recycling Organics." This strategy is part of a series of strategies on building a more circular economy for all.

USCC commented on U.S. EPA's draft National Food Loss and Waste Strategy, emphasizing the need for compost markets; inclusion of compost in Climate Smart USDA agriculture strategies; the need for federal funding for infrastructure and for research gaps in carbon sequestration of compost; and the need for FTC's next Green Guides revision to address misuse of the definition of compost in some products.

On September 5, 2025, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) launched Feed It Onward, an initiative geared toward reducing food waste and addressing food insecurity across the U.S. The voluntary program supports partnerships with farms, food brands, grocery stores, military bases, restaurants, and more to encourage food donations within communities.
Draft National Strategy
USCC Comments
Final Strategy

### Plastic Pollution Prevention Strategy

USCC comments on EPA's draft strategy to reduce pollution and single-use plastics included noting that federal investment in infrastructure development requires national collection of data

on composting practices around the country (achieved by the Recycling and Composting Accountability Act, see above); and pointing out that the strategy should clarify that composting is the production of compost and not the action of placing organic materials for collection, among other comments.
Draft National Strategy
USCC Comments

### Update of EPA's Waste Reduction (WARM) Model

WARM (Waste Reduction Model) is a tool developed by the US Environmental Protection Agency in 1998 that estimates potential greenhouse gas emissions, energy savings, and economic impacts of waste management methods. In 2022 and 2023, EPA conducted an external peer review and data quality assessment as part of efforts to maintain WARM's scientific integrity. During the December holidays in 2023, EPA announced that it was taking comments on potential changes to the WARM model version16 as a result of the peer review/assessment process. Many organizations and partners came to USCC with concerns about the short turnaround time (originally due in January). USCC appealed to the U.S. EPA to extend the comments by an extra month, which EPA granted.

USCC's comments requested deeper reconsideration of the changes in the compost industry regarding: Scale and size; new technologies; changes in energy usage of composting equipment; updating data on fugitive emissions, and carbon storage for compost, among other recommendations.

**USCC's WARM COMMENTS**

EPA published the Waste Reduction Model version 16 in December 2023: Waste Reduction Model Version 16 (xls) (3.44 MB) . Version 16 contains updates to several materials including food waste, mixed electronics, and the wood product construction and demolition materials. EPA also updated economic factors in the model based on newly available data. Specific changes include the following:

- EPA revised the landfilling emission factors for food waste material categories to better account for the water content of each specific food type disposed of.

## Grants

**Urban Ag/CFWG**

The Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Practices invested more than $15 million in grants directly creating compost programs. The Composting and Food Waste Reduction Grants, created in the 2018 Farm Bill, was on the precipice of being cut when USCC and partners successfully pressed for restoration of funding.

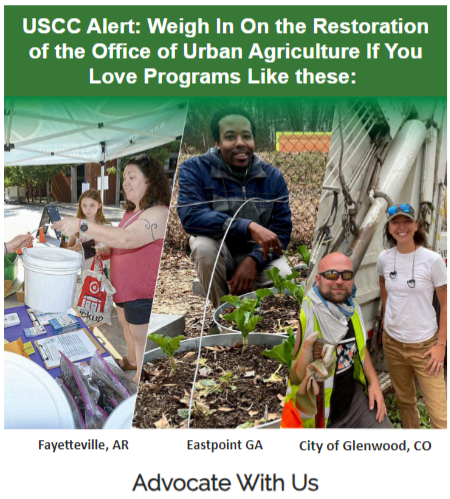
**SWIFR/REO**

EPA  published a notice of funding opportunity (NOFO) for the Solid Waste Infrastructure for Recycling (SWIFR) grants for Tribes and Intertribal Consortia. Grant amounts will be approximately $20 million in awards ranging from $100,000 - $1.5 million per award.

**Climate Pollution Grants**
The EPA's Climate Pollution Reduction Grants (CPRG) program provided nearly $5 billion in grants to states, local governments, tribes, and territories to develop and implement ambitious plans for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and other harmful air pollution. USCC and partners spent time alerting our communities of this program to ensure that state planners who had to apply first were aware that soil health and composting projects are part of climate pollution reduction (usually the grant notifications were assigned to state Climate offices housed in transportation and energy departments). Authorized under Section 60114 of the Inflation Reduction Act, this two-phase program provided $250 million for noncompetitive planning grants, and approximately $4.6 billion for competitive implementation grants.
In September, EPA announced the state and tribal governments awarded, and only a handful included composting and food waste reduction.

**Composting and Food Waste Grant Program Grassroots Lobbying**
USCC and its partners Kiss the Ground, National Sustainable Ag Coalition, and Zero Food Waste Coalition tackled the risk of being unfunded in this year's federal appropriations bill—putting in jeopardy program such as the Composting and Food Waste Reduction Grants ($15 million invested in composting projects since 2020) and Urban Agriculture Innovation Grants.

USCC conducted a Compost Action Center Campaign in fall 2024 for restoration of funding for the Office of Urban Agriculture (where the Composting and Food Waste Reduction Grants were funded) that generated 300 advocate emails to Congressional representative.; It was successful and funding was restored. See the full Urban Ag Program outreach here.




# State Initiatives

## COLORADO

**Sales Tax Exemption on Compost/Soil Amendment Products (SB25-026)**

**SB25-026 was a Senate bill that proposed amending the definition of "agricultural compounds" as part of the definition of "wholesale sale" for sales and use tax statutes. USCC and COCC supported the bill, because it exempted the sales and use tax on soil conditioners, plant amendments, plant growth regulators, mulches, compost, soil used for aboveground production of agricultural commodities, manure, fish for non-stocking purposes, fish embryos, and fish eggs beginning January 1, 2026. The bill passed and was signed by the Governor.**

[COCC Letter in Support of SB25-026]

**Deductions for Net Sports Betting Proceeds (HB25-1311)**

**HB25-1311 was a House bill that, while not on its surface directly related to organics, proposed directing unexpended and unencumbered money collected by sports betting organizations the water plan implementation cash fund created in earlier legislation instead of remaining in the hands of the bettors. Among many other expenditures for this money, these peripherally related uses were the most closely relevant to COCC and USCC missions:**

- **Conservation and land use projects, including activities that implement long-term strategies for water conservation, land use, and drought planning.**
- **Engagement and innovation activities, including activities that support water education, outreach, and innovation efforts.**
- **Agricultural projects, including projects that provide technical assistance or improve agricultural water efficiency; and**
- **Environmental and recreation projects, including projects that promote watershed health, environmental health, and recreation.**

**The bill passed and was signed by the Governor.**

## COCC Letter in Support of HB25-1311

**Colorado** had compliance deadlines and fee obligations in effect, with Colorado producers needing to register with CAA by October 1, 2024. CO CAA page

### FLORIDA

**HB211 / SB374**
The USCC supported the Florida Composting Council work with legislators in the Senate and House to successfully pass legislation that aims to ensure  Florida has a long history of protecting the ability of farmers to manage their land and functions in ways that support overall farming freedoms that benefit Florida as a whole. This legislation further clarifies to  prohibit a governmental entity from adopting or enforcing any ordinance, regulation, rule, or policy that would limit an activity of a bonafide farm operation from collection, storage, processing and distribution of a farm product on agricultural land, and add plants and plant products, regardless of whether such plants or plant products are edible or nonedible, or any animal useful to humans. This would allow food, green waste, and manure to be collected anywhere in Florida for composting.
USCC Position

### HAWAII

**HB 750**
Passed needs assessment laws in May to study the feasibility of future packaging EPR laws. USCC supported HB750 with testimony and support to Rep Nicole Lowen, the bill's sponsor.

## MAINE

Modified its 2021 law in late June 2025 (LD 1423) to better align with other state EPR programs and began the RFP process for a stewardship organization in September 2025.

## MARYLAND

**Organic Waste Surcharge (**HB42/SB134**)**
Maryland failed to pass a Solid Waste Disposal Surcharge and Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Fund and Grant Programs, legislative proposal to establish a $2/ton surcharge on final waste disposal to fund grant programs for waste reduction. This funding would support initiatives such as the On-Farm Organics Diversion and Recycling Grant Program, the Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Grant Program, and the County Wasted Food Block Grant Program, all aimed at improving organics recycling and diverting food waste from landfills.
USCC Position

## MINNESOTA

Named CAA as its Producer Responsibility Organization (PRO). Eunomia was selected as contractor for preliminary assessment (due December 31, 2025) and first needs assessment (due December 31, 2026). The advisory board recommended extending the report timeline to January 15, 2025 to allow for a 30-day public comment period. The initial service provider deadline was January 1, 2025 and July 1, 2025 for producers.

## MISSOURI

USCC provided a letter of support for the Legislature to recognize International Compost Awareness Week in a resolution for 2025. Bill here

## NEW YORK S5331


USCC supported this bill to further expand New York State's food donation and food scraps recycling program. Banning the disposal of waste by scaling down the annual average tonnage requirement every two years will help build infrastructure and prepare the market for increased local management of inedible organic residuals for composting (as well as edible food for humans/animal feed). The bill is still awaiting the governor's signature. S5759 and A6192 proposed a five-year moratorium on the land application of biosolids. The USCC provided letters of opposition and conducted a Compost Action Center

Campaign that generated 14 unique letters of opposition sent by local stakeholders to the NY State Assembly, and they were not passed.
USCC Position

## NEW JERSEY

**S203/A4118**
The USCC provided a letter of support for this bill requiring the Department of Environmental Protection to not require enclosed structures for composting, and to update existing regulations to adopt industry best practices for odor, leachate, and vector control. It did not pass.
USCC Position Letter

## OREGON

**HB3018**
Oregon House Bill 3018 was introduced in the 2025 session to require businesses that produce large amounts of food waste to compost it. The proposal would mandate that any entity that cooks, serves, or sells food and generates more than 1,000 pounds of food waste per week at a single location must arrange for its collection and transport to an authorized composting facility. The bill failed to pass.
USCC Position Letter

**Oregon** had compliance deadlines and fee obligations in effect, with producers submitting their first supply report by March 31, 2025.

## RHODE ISLAND

**HB 6207**
Passed needs assessment laws in June 2025, to study the feasibility of future packaging EPR laws.

## TEXAS

**HB1674** The USCC provided Letters of Support and Opposition for a number of bills affecting Texas' composting industry. HB1674 and SB886 would have imposed un-scientifically based extremely low limits on the levels of PFAS in agricultural products that the USCC opposed. It did not pass.
USCC Position

**HB4271** would allow any legislator to request a public hearing on any compost facility. The USCC opposed this bill due to the uncertainty it would provide to the composting industry. The Bill did not pass.
USCC Position

**SB2078** would require a local food waste ordinance to be in place before a composting facility could accept out of county waste. The USCC opposed the bill but it passed and became effective on 9/1/2025. With USCC and TNLA support, TXCC was able to improve and help amend the bill by staying engaged with Sen. Kolkhorst's office (as noted by Risa).
USCC Position

**WASHINGTON**

**HB2301**
This bill was a win for composting in many ways, but will need rigorous follow up with regulation to ensure an even playing field for industries working in food waste to ensure Washington's philosophy of source-separated food scrap collection is maintained. Washington state advocates worked hard for this bill, which provides many tools and policies for successful wasted food scrap reduction and management. Organics collection will be required for single-family residents in urbanized areas of the state. The bill establishes multiple initiatives for promoting the reduction and collection of organic waste, including: a new grant program to help city and county staff and others to do technical assistance, education, enforcement, and upgrade infrastructure; enforcement of the labeling requirements for compostable products passed in 2019 by setting up a complaint system for non-compliant materials to be investigated and stopped; and establishing a food rescue system for the state of Washington.

USCC's concern, which was expressed in letters during the bill's negotiation, is that its provisions could result in skirting of source separation of organics during collection, a key requirement for maximum diversion and quality compost product. Compost facilities in Washington state have a default 5% contamination threshold due to the recognition and hands-on experience by compost producers that contamination compromises compost product quality. The bill passed with no numerical limits on contamination for pre-processing or depackaging, which could allow mixed waste collection and result in material being sent to disposal. This has been experienced in the Northeast with the introduction of depackaging when anaerobic digestion facilities began allowing generators who previously source separated for food rescue and composting to discard mixed containers of compostable and rescue-worthy food scrap, along with packaging, for depackaging and eventual landfill disposal. The Washington Department of Ecology must make regulations that set contamination limits on all methods of handling food waste.

UPDATE: The Washington Department of Ecology proceeded with the rulemaking process to address contamination limits. The USCC has been actively involved in the Public Comment Period of the rulemaking process, working with the Washington State Composting Industry, and in submitting comments during the comment period. As part of our efforts, we conducted a Compost Action Center campaign to urge the State of Washington, Department of Ecology to

support source separated organics as it considers updates to Chapter 17-350 WAC Solid Waste Handling Standards.The rulemaking process continues.
USCC Position

**SB5033**
Washington Senate Bill 5033, passed in spring and approved by the Governor in May 2025, mandates new sampling and testing requirements for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in biosolids for facilities regulated under the state's Biosolids General Permit. The bill requires the Washington State Department of Ecology to develop guidance and establishes a timeline for wastewater treatment facilities to conduct testing and report results, aiming to address a data gap regarding PFAS levels in municipal biosolids. USCC supported this bill as one of the few that was science-based and established a reasonable basis for studying the methodology of testing.
USCC Letter

Washington enacted an EPR bill SB 5284 on May 17, 2025, focusing on capturing consumer packaging and expanding collection services.

# USCC TOOLS

## Lobbying

**Spring/Summer 2024**: USCC participated with Kiss the Ground and Zero Food Waste Coalition in meetings with Congressional representatives regarding Farm Bill priorities that aligned with USCC's Farm Bill priorities.
(See full list here).

**Spring 2025:** On Thursday, March 13, 2025, 15 USCC staff and members visited House and Senate with  Washington lobbyists to discuss and support the House and Senate Bills that are filed or hoped to be filed to benefit composting.

## Policy Tours

The USCC did not conduct policy tours for its federal legislators this year due to the current environment in the federal government for environmental policies and initiatives.

## Compost Action Center


The Compost Action Center was opened in 2023 on USCC's website as a tool to easily connect advocates with their legislators and regulators in the event of legislation/regulation needing grassroots support or opposition.

This year, the platform supporting the Compost Action Center underwent an upgrade process to improve user experience and impact on representatives. USCC staff worked to create the new-and-improved Compost Action Center and migrate old campaigns onto the new platform. In total since its launch, the Compost Action Center has hosted about 7,310 actions. These include letters sent to senators and representatives, signatures added to petitions, and sign-ups to become advocates for certain issues such as banning PFAS from consumer products. There were 5,890 actions reported in the 2024 Public Policy Report.

The Compost Action Center currently has 3,230 contacts. There were 2,829 contacts at the time of the 2024 Public Policy Report. The USCC's database of compost advocates continues to grow each time the USCC creates a new campaign and shares it with its network. USCC

encourages its network to share the campaigns with their own networks, growing the reach and impact of the Compost Action Center.

# *APPENDIX I*

## USCC Policy Positions

*The following policy positions have been adopted by the USCC's Board of Directors in consultation with the USCC's Legislative and Environmental Affairs Committee.*

### *Compost Use – Public Incentives*

*2024*

Designated uses of compost in the form of roads and transportation, parks and recreation facilities, government lands, and legislative/regulatory requirements for use of compost in private projects (such as green infrastructure in land development, including bioswales, green roofs, stormwater retention ponds, and other publicly required environmental protection measures) provide proven benefits to soils and clean water and are a US Composting Council policy priority.

### *Definition of Compost*

The American Association of Plant and Food Controls adopted this definition of compost, which recognizes the need for stable compost when produced at commercial scale. This definition should be used in all levels of government definitions and regulations pertaining to required compost characteristics for horticultural and agronomic purposes:
Compost: The product manufactured through the controlled aerobic, biological decomposition of biodegradable materials. The product has undergone mesophilic and thermophilic temperatures, which significantly reduces the viability of pathogens and weed seeds (in accordance with EPA 40 CFR 503 standards) and stabilizes the carbon such that it is beneficial to plant growth. Compost is typically used as a soil amendment, but may also contribute plant nutrients. (AAPFCO definition, official 2018)

The STA program contract adds this additional line to the AAPFCO definition: 'Finished compost is typically screened to reduce its particle size, to improve soil incorporation.

Compost meeting this definition will be
● Free of weed seeds and plant pathogens
● Free of human and animal pathogens (sufficiently reduced as to make regrowth unlikely) and monitored/tested to assure so
● Sufficiently stable, as to allow for the release of plant nutrition, especially nitrogen

### *Compostable Products Labelling*

*2022*

The US Composting Council (USCC) and Biodegradable Products Institute developed model legislation for labeling compostable products. The principles were developed after months of consensus-building by a task force composed of both organizations' members, including

compostable product-makers, certifiers, municipal leaders, allied members of USCC, and compost manufacturers. Task Force members agreed that products should be labeled with distinguishing elements including tinting and striping and the use of certification logos, while non-compostable items should be prohibited from using identical labeling and misleading terminology. Additionally, all compostable items should be defined by required lab testing and are encouraged to consider field testing.
**Model Principles for Labeling Compostable Products**

### *Emissions of Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCS) in Composting*

*2012*

SUMMARY: The types and volumes of VOCs emitted from properly operated commercial composting facilities are naturally occurring (biogenic) and do not pose significant risk to the formation of ground level ozone.

### *Food Recycling Units and Dehydrators*

*2023*

The USCC advocates for the commercial composting industry, which represents billions of dollars of investment and livelihood of those employed in the industry. USCC has a strong interest in protecting the industry from false and confusing claims for devices that are marketed as composting equipment or composting units ("composters"), when indeed their outputs are not the finished compost product—per the AAPFCO definition—that is ready for immediate application. These devices are sized for home and commercial use and marketed as "composters," whether for in-home use or in commercial/institutional settings. They accept food and other organic waste, and heat, dehydrate, and mechanically break down these materials. While the resulting product can look somewhat like compost, they fail to meet the AAPFCO definition, and more importantly, cannot be used in the same efficacious way. Marketing these devices as "composters" and further suggesting the resulting material may be used in applications suitable for compost is misleading, confusing to the public, and damaging to the composting industry. A negative consumer experience from using the output of devices calling themselves "composters" will impact sales of "true" compost (by the AAPFCO definition). In summary, those technologies whose output is accurately defined as dehydrated or pretreated materials, (which can be useful feedstock for the composting process or other applications), should not have "compost" in their product name and marketing materials or imply in their product descriptions that they produce compost.
Full Position Statement

## *Organics Bans*

*Updated 2024*

SUMMARY:
The USCC supports various forms of legislation/regulation that:
a) mandates generators of yard trimmings to compost yard trimmings on-site or to source separate yard trimmings for composting instead of sending them for disposal

b) Either mandates municipalities and/or commercial and institutional producers of food residuals to divert food residuals or bans them from disposal (1).

Banned organics can include a wide variety of diverse materials. USCC recommends that communities initially focus efforts on organic waste streams that will have an immediate impact (such as green waste) on diversion goals. Over time, additional organic waste streams should be added to the focus, aimed at increasing overall capture rates.
The effect of these bans should be to:

1. source-separate food residuals from other solid waste for recycling;
2. follow EPA's Wasted Food Scale of pathways for food scraps
3. recycle or treat inedible food residuals on-site or send their organic waste to a composting facility.

IMPLEMENTATION:
USCC recommends, based upon markets and the state political and economic environment, that bans:

1. Begin with a green waste/yard waste ban, which is easier to manage and permit at state and local levels.(3)
2. When banning/mandating food scraps, prioritize and require food waste reduction and rescue when food is still edible by people or animals;
3. Determine the jurisdiction's readiness as to whether to include commercial/institutional generators and/or residential generators at once or in phases;
4. Study levels of existing infrastructure and difficulty of expanding infrastructure in jurisdictions to determine what infrastructure is needed and how to phase in mandates and bans to meet this need.(4)
    a. Allow a phase-in period based on infrastructure readiness;(5)
    a. Some bans set a mileage "trigger" for required participation; this should be considered in response to infrastructure, markets, and economic conditions in the state, and to increase likelihood of localized solutions. If the amount of tonnage generated is the trigger, a state may graduate implementation from 12months to two years at an amount (two tons is suggested) depending upon infrastructure readiness and, over time, decrease in tonnage;(6)
2. Institute dedicated funding prior to the ban's start to develop infrastructure (equipment, site development, collection) in the form of grants from tipping fees or other dedicated sources;
3. Establish specific and funded ongoing and continuous education programs, including contamination mitigation strategies and compost benefits, to assist in implementation of mandates and/or bans.(7)
4. Establish enforcement mechanisms in the legislation, including who (agency of government) and how (inspections, how and when). A waiver can be included but should have strict requirements and be required to renew each year.

### *Perfluoroalkyl Compounds and Compost*

*2023*

Compost facilities do not use PFAS; compost is not a significant exposure route to harmful levels of PFAS. Assessments of contact from numerous state environmental agencies indicate that inhalation or ingestion of typical compost does not threaten human health. USCC is awaiting the U.S. EPA's Health Risk Assessment (expected in late 2024) for guidance on federally scientific standards for safe levels of PFAs chemicals in soils, biosolids, and compost. Composting as an industry should be exempted from any liability regulations or programs that direct cleanup costs to producers of PFAS since the compost production process is a passive receiver of PFAS chemicals.

*Position Paper Here*