



A: Communities throughout the country are adopting public composting programs. Warren County could be among them. B: In some NYS communities, food scraps are being mixed with wood chips and transformed into rich compost. Photo courtesy of Cornell Cooperative Extension. C: Warren County generates 25,000 tons of food scraps every year that could be recycled.

Organics Composting Center Envisioned for County

By Anthony F. Hall

If New York is to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 85% before 2050, as required by state law, it must reduce food loss and waste by almost as much.

Methane from food rotting in landfills, gasses from waste incineration and carbon from trucks hauling garbage from one county to another are responsible for at least 12% of the state's greenhouse gas emissions.

On its own, Warren County cannot save New York State, let alone the planet. Nevertheless, its officials are doing their best to play their part.

With help from a \$40,000 Climate Smart Community grant from New York State, Warren County is in the process of developing an organics management plan that could divert compostable material such as food scraps, brush and leaves from the waste stream, shrinking it by as much as 33%.

According to David Wright, a consultant retained by Warren County to help draft the plan, approximately 25,000 tons of food scraps are generated by Warren County residents, institutions and businesses every year. That's a large part of the waste it trucks regularly to the trash plant in Hudson Falls.

"Warren County is interested to do something different with its organics," said Wright.

Among other things, the group and the consultants drafting the Organics Management Plan will assess the feasibility of constructing an industrial-sized, inter-municipal

Costs of Hauling Waste for Local Governments Rising

By Thom Randall

SPECIAL TO THE LAKE GEORGE MIRROR

Due to increased hauling and disposal charges, the cost of depositing household trash at the town of Warrensburg's transfer station increased from 10 cents per pound to 15 cents per pound beginning May 1.

Warrensburg Town Supervisor Kevin Geraghty announced the increase at the town board's April 12 meeting, observing that the hike was necessary to keep the transfer station's operation from being a financial burden on

taxpayers.

He said the transfer station was operating at a deficit, and it was not fair for the town's trash disposal costs to be paid through property taxes, because many residents are paying for curbside trash collection from private haulers — and thus would be subsidizing others' trash disposal costs.

Geraghty urged residents with a lot of trash on hand to bring it to the transfer station before May 1. Geraghty said that if hauling costs decline, the town would likely revert to 10 cents per pound.

composting facility, capable of managing the county's commercial and residential waste.

"A public-private partnership might be the best solution, with Warren County contributing some of the start-up costs and the land on which the facility could be built," said Kevin Hajos, the county's superintendent of Public Works.

But, he added, "The management plan will guide us. Once we have a draft plan in place, we'll have a discussion with the Board of Supervisors about the direction in which we should be headed as it relates to organics and composting."

As of now, the cost — in both fuel and carbon emissions — erases the

benefits of requiring large generators of waste such as hotels, colleges and grocery stores to truck their organics to composting facilities beyond the county's borders.

However, a state law that took effect in 2022 requires any institution creating more than two tons of waste per week to compost its food scraps if an organics recycler is located within twenty-five miles.

According to the Department of Environmental Conservation, Warren County is currently home to twelve facilities generating that volume of food waste.

Bolton Supervisor Ron Conover, who chairs the Board of Supervisors' Public Works Committee, said the

adoption of the so-called "New York State Food Donation and Food Scraps Recycling Law" is among the catalysts driving the county to build a recycling facility and start composting on a large scale.

But, he said, "we should be doing it anyway."

"The escalating costs of transportation and disposal require it," said Conover. "They're no small item."

Following the public information session held at the Warren County Municipal Center on May 18, the draft Organics Management Plan and its recommendations will be submitted to the Warren County Board of Supervisors for adoption and implementation.

"I'm very excited about this process. We still have far to go, but I think we've already come a long way," said Supervisor Conover.



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