

# Organics Management in Vermont

A state-wide overview of legislation, regulation, and current practices

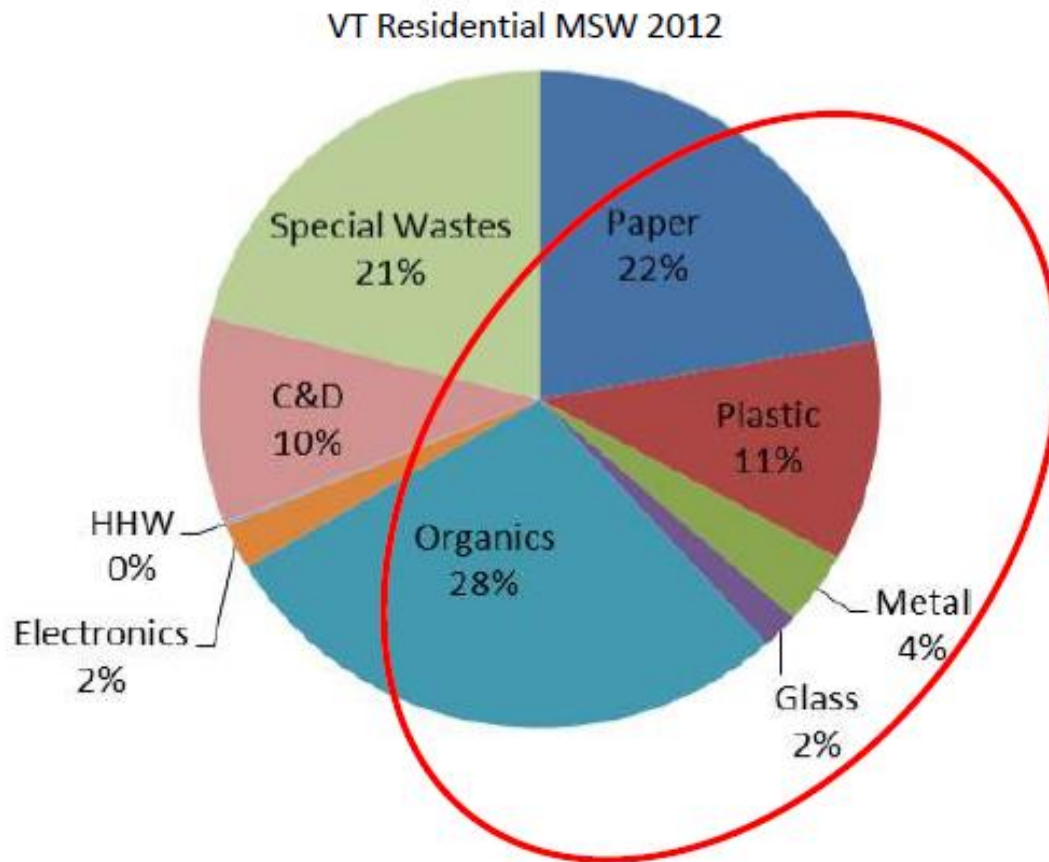


**Northeast Resource  
Recovery Association**  
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Committed to the future of rural communities.

# Why Organics Matter in VT



**~50% of MSW  
could be  
recycled/  
composted**

**~60,000 tons/yr  
food disposed**

Jamieson, SWANA 2016

# Act 148: Universal Recycling Law

- **GOAL:** To decrease the amount of waste disposed
- **STRATEGY:** To provide more consistent services statewide by increasing convenience, choices, and incentives for alternative disposal options

- **Highlights:**

- ✓ Focuses on recyclables and organics
- ✓ Phased-in approach to allow development of infrastructure
- ✓ Organics Hierarchy



Jamieson, SWANA 2016

# Food Scrap Generators Phase-In

- Phases for larger food scrap generators, if there is a facility within 20 miles
  - 2014 > 104 tons/year **2 tons/wk**
  - 2015 > 52 tons/year **1 ton/wk**
  - 2016 > 26 tons/year **1/2 ton/wk**
  - 2017 > 18 tons/year **1/3 ton/wk**
  - **2020 all food scraps banned regardless of distance**



Lawn and Leaf/ Other organics already banned

Jamieson, SWANA 2016

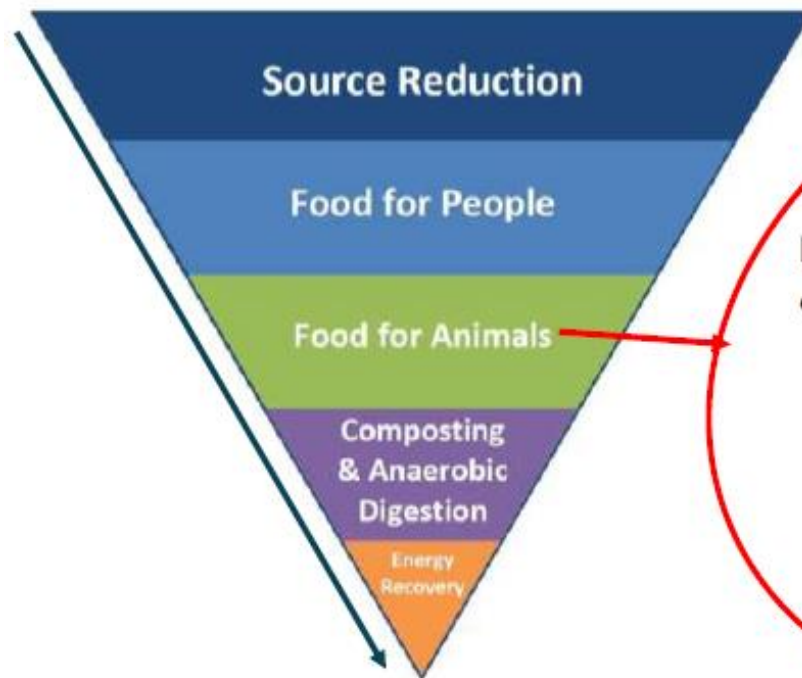
# Food Recovery Hierarchy



**Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act (1996) –**  
helps protect food donors from liability associated with donated food.

Jamieson, SWANA 2016

# Food Recovery Hierarchy



Chickens  
Swine (NO meat)

No reporting required,  
challenging to quantify.

At least 4 farms with  
significant number of  
chickens feeding on  
food scraps.

Issues with some chicken  
feeding operations.

Jamieson, SWANA 2016

# Food Recovery Hierarchy



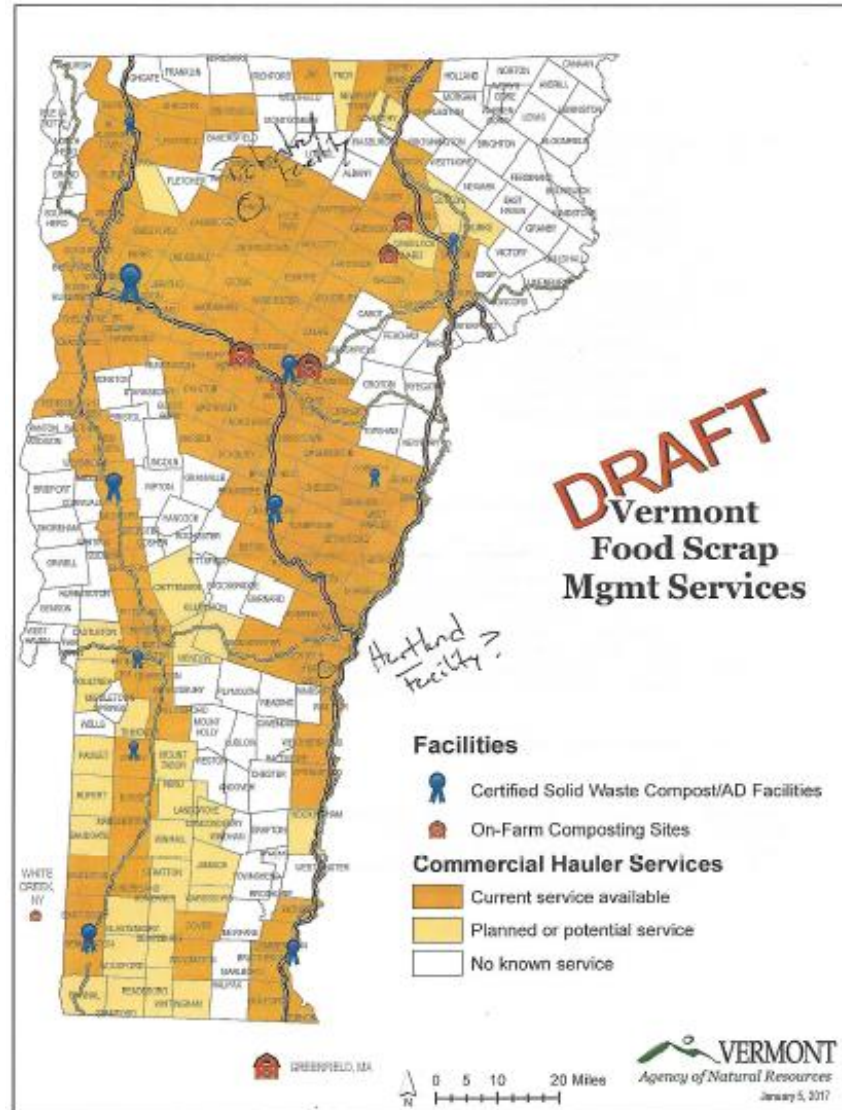
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# Certified Organics Facilities





# Service Reality



# The Good News

- All VT municipalities adopted Pay-as-You-Throw
- 5% decrease in MSW disposal (2014 vs. 2015)
- Diversion up 2%, from 33% to 35%
- Businesses and consumers pay attention to wasted food
  - VT Food Bank: **increase in food rescue >40%**
    - **BIG** increase from supermarkets, food retailers
  - Collection of food scraps going to composting is also up

Jamieson, SWANA 2016

# Issues

- ❑ 20 Mile Rule
  - ❑ 20 mile rule for food scraps ONLY works if infrastructure exists and applies only to permitted SW facilities
- ❑ Animal Feed “Loophole”
  - ❑ Composters switching to animal operations as a regulatory loophole, which precludes permitting & sidesteps the 20 mile rule
- ❑ Consistency of collection/available services
  - ❑ What each composter will take, and how, may be different -- recreates the recycling problem 148 was supposed to solve
  - ❑ Animal feed – requires separation of meat, utensils, plastics
  - ❑ Bio-Plastics
    - ❑ Growing usage, but not eligible for “organic certification”

# Issues

- ❑ Infrastructure/ Capacity
  - ❑ Current processing capacity falls short by several thousand tons – more infrastructure needed to meet demand
- ❑ Anaerobic Digestion
  - ❑ AD could close the capacity gap, but investment & infrastructure are lacking
- ❑ Contamination
  - ❑ Major source of expense for composters
- ❑ Carbon Sourcing
  - ❑ Paying for carbon amendments limits margins and increases costs
- ❑ Costs
  - ❑ Haulers, among others, are concerned about unfunded mandates & new costs

# Funding Gap

## Organics Infrastructure Cost Summary (2014 - 2020)

New trucks	\$261,340
Containers	\$6,534,302
Drop off transfer station capacity	\$968,456
Organics processing facilities	<u>\$21,900,000*</u>
	\$29,664,098

\* Assumes: 30% on-farm composting, 1 centralized composting facility/county, cost of AD w/ pre-processing comparable to composting. \$7,900,000 by end of 2016.

Barbagallo, SWANA 2016

# Capacity Gap

Vermont Certified Organics Facilities	2015 Tons F.S.
1. Green Mountain Compost (CSWD)	4,028
2. Windham SWMD Compost Facility	685
3. TAM Organics Compost Facility	615
4. Kingdom View Compost	416
5. Hudak Farm Composting Facility	300
6. Vermont Natural Ag. Products	142
7. Vermont Compost Co. (Fairmont Farms)	0
8. Cookeville Compost	Not Reported
• GROW Compost	Not Reported
9. Vermont Tech AD	Data Not Available
10. West Rutland Organics Recovery Facility	0

Compare to an estimated 60,000 annual tons of FS **60,000 > 6,186**

Barbagallo, SWANA 2016

# Takeaways

- ❑ Intentions are good
  - ❑ Divert and recover materials according to highest and best use
- ❑ Initial results good
  - ❑ Drop in MSW generation
  - ❑ Modest increase in diversion
  - ❑ Increase in food donation/source reduction
- ❑ Issues of capacity/funding need to be addressed

# Questions?