

The Honorable Maura Healey

Massachusetts State House

24 Beacon Street Boston, MA 02133

Dear Governor Healey,

We, the undersigned officials from various municipalities across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, write to you today with a pressing concern and an urgent call to action. As stewards of our communities and the environment, we are interested in expanding our efforts to divert food waste from landfills, but we lack the infrastructure and funding to develop comprehensive local or regional systems for the collection and processing of food waste into valuable resources. With the Commonwealth of Massachusetts support, we could expand our composting efforts. We ask the State to put in place concrete plans, funding and technical assistance to increase composting infrastructure, working in partnership with communities like ours to divert food waste and minimize the climate impact of discarded food. An expansion of sustainable waste management practices will benefit our residents and our economy. Communities like ours are ready to partner with the state to expand composting in MA.

- Now is the time for Massachusetts to accelerate progress, as we must [more than double](#) our rate of organic waste diversion to meet the state's 2030 solid waste master plan goals. As you well know, the state's landfills are filling up. In 2022, Massachusetts collectively exported 2,590,000 tons of waste, an increase of 20,000 tons from 2021 to 2022. Exported waste is costly, often being sent to other states as far away as Alabama. Massachusetts exports wood, brick, asphalt and other debris, much of which is banned from our landfills. That waste accounted for almost a third of what's buried in Maine's state landfill. Every year, Bay Staters throw away 6 million tons of garbage. [Nearly 25% of that garbage is food](#). Some of this food is likely to be edible while other food waste is better handled via composting. Meanwhile, a recent U.S. Census survey found that 21.9 percent of Massachusetts households with children do not have access to sufficient or quality food, despite the abundance produced. Methane is a potent greenhouse gas, and while landfills such as Chicopee, Crapo Hill, Fitchburg-Westminster, Granby, Plainville, Quarry Hills, Southbridge, and Taunton collect landfill gas and use it as an energy source, [according to EPA data](#), landfills are one of the largest sources of methane emissions in our state. The environmental and health implications of methane emissions are well-documented, contributing to climate change which disproportionately affects our most vulnerable communities. These impacts align closely with our shared commitment to environmental justice, ensuring that all Massachusetts residents have the right to a clean and healthy environment.

We urge you to take executive action to spur the diversion of organic waste from landfills. By implementing and supporting policies that encourage composting and other organic waste processing methods, we can significantly reduce methane emissions and slow the rate at which landfills are filling. The benefits of such actions extend far beyond environmental protection.

Food diversion and composting programs should be considered an environmental justice priority to reduce pollution in vulnerable and over-burdened communities. Diverting organic waste from landfills can also unlock numerous beneficial products, such as compost, which enriches our soil and supports local agriculture. Moreover, this shift can stimulate economic growth by creating new green jobs in composting facilities, waste management, and related sectors. The textile ban is a notable example of how policy innovation has created programs and outlets for the successful recovery of materials. These actions are key to achieving your Administration's greenhouse gas reduction and environmental justice goals.

We envision a collaborative effort between the state government and local municipalities to develop and implement a comprehensive plan for organics diversion. This plan should include:

1. **Increased Funding and Resources:** Allocate state funding to support municipal and regional composting programs and food waste diversion, including infrastructure development and public education campaigns. **Examples of needed infrastructure include** funding for curbside collection programs, drop off programs and compost sites.
2. **Regulatory Support:** Establish regulatory reforms, including, as funding is put in place to support needed infrastructure, steadily increasing the percentage of organic waste reclaimed and diverted from disposal.
3. **Public-Private Partnerships:** Foster collaborations between public entities and private companies to create a robust market for compost and other organic products, ensuring that these materials are processed and utilized effectively.

By taking these steps, we can position Massachusetts as a leader in sustainable waste management and climate action. Your leadership and commitment to this cause will not only improve the quality of life for our residents but also set a powerful example for other states to follow.

We stand ready to work with you and your administration to achieve these critical goals. Together, we can build a healthier, more sustainable, and more equitable future for all Massachusetts residents.

Sincerely,

Juan Pablo Jaramillo, Councilor At Large, City of Revere

Natasha Megie-Maddrey Esq, Ward 4 City Councilor Lynn

Nicole McClain, Councilor At Large, City of Lynn

Debra Panetta Board of Selectmen Chair Saugus

Bill Humphrey, City Councilor Ward 5, City of Newton

Julia Malakie, City Councilor Ward 3, City of Newton

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Alison M Leary, City Councilor Ward 1, City of Newton

Maria Scibelli Greenberg, City Councilor Ward 1, City of Newton

Andreae Downs, City Councilor Ward 5, City of Newton

Vicki Danberg City Councilor Ward 6, City of Newton

Susan Albright City Councilor Ward 2, City of Newton

Rena Getz Escudero City Councilor Ward 5, City Newton

Andrea Kelly City Councilor Ward 3, City of Newton

Rachel Maiore Vice President City Councilor Ward 7, City of Northampton

Sara Brown City Councilor At-Large, City of Greenfield

Anthony Novelli Executive Director Greater New Bedford Regional Refuse Management District

Jennifer Vieira, Director, Facilities and Fleet Management, City of New Bedford

Henry Santana, City Councilor At-Large, City of Boston

Ruthzee Louijeune, City Council President, City of Boston

Julia Mejia, City Councilor At-Large, City of Boston

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Stephany Infante, Council Vice-President, City of Lawrence

Gabriella Coletta-Zapata, City Councilor District 1, City of Boston

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Angela Guarino-Sawaya, City Councilor Ward 5, City of Revere

Marc Silvestri. City Council President, City of Revere

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Thu Nguyen, City Councilor At-Large, City of Worcester

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Michelle Kelley, City Councilor At-Large, City of Revere

Khrystian King, Vice Chair of City Council, City of Worcester

Robert Haas III, City Councilor At-Large, City of Revere

Rachel Gordon, City Councilor Precinct 2, City of Greenfield

Rachel Maiore, City Council Vice President, City of Northampton

Kyle Davis, City Councilor At-Large, City of Salem

Phillip Duarte, City Councilor At-Large, City of Taunton

Katherine Golub, City Councilor Precinct 1, City of Greenfield