



Northeast Resource Recovery Association

"Partnering to make recycling strong through economic and environmentally sound solutions"

February 10, 2025

Hon. Kenneth Weyler Chair
House Finance Committee
Legislative Office Building
Concord, New Hampshire

Re: HB 619: Relative to making an appropriation to the solid waste management fund

Dear Chair Weyler and Members of the Committee:

HB 619 would make an appropriation of one million dollars to the Solid Waste Management Fund (SWMF), with half of the funds being used for projects associated with the reduction and diversion of wasted food. The Northeast Resource Recovery Association (NRRA) does not take a position on any proposed legislation. NRRA is providing testimony to share its experience supporting municipalities with their recycling and waste reduction efforts in NH as it relates to the bill.

NRRA has over 40 years of experience partnering with NH municipalities to provide education and technical assistance in support of waste reduction and recycling. NRRA is the oldest and largest cooperative-model recycling nonprofit in the United States, and NRRA's membership includes 90% of NH municipalities. NRRA also participates in the NH Solid Waste Working Group (SWWG), which was formed to advise the NH Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) on planning for NH's solid waste future. The SWWG previously supported the introduction and passage of HB 462, which appropriated one million dollars to the SWMF, at least 50% of which will support food waste management projects.

Food Waste is Likely the Single Largest Component of Municipal Trash Landfilled in NH

According to estimates by the Environmental Protection Agency, food scraps in 2018 (the most recent numbers available) accounted for the largest component of landfilled municipal solid waste by weight in the United States at 24%. That is the single largest component of residential household waste landfilled across the country. Although we do not yet have precise numbers for NH, it is reasonable to estimate that food waste also constitutes the largest component of our residential household waste being landfilled or incinerated in NH.

Landfilling or incinerating food scraps creates both negative environmental and financial impacts. Landfilled food waste does not break down by composting. Instead, landfilled food waste produces methane gas, a powerful greenhouse gas. Landfilling food scraps is also expensive because food scraps are heavy, and municipalities and businesses pay by weight to dispose of waste. The Northeast, including NH, already has the highest average cost to dispose of municipal solid waste in the country.

Providing Incentives for Municipalities to Increase Food Waste Diversion is Consistent with the NH Solid Waste Management Plan

NHDES' 2022 Solid Waste Management Plan emphasizes the need to divert food waste from landfills and incinerators due to its high volume and weight compared to other material being disposed in NH. The plan includes action items to encourage the increased diversion of food waste. Action 3.9 of the plan calls for, in part, exploring incentives for municipalities to increase diversion of certain materials, including food waste.

Similarly, Action 8.3 recommends that the State “[p]ursue opportunities for funding to establish a grant program as authorized by RSA 149-R16 to support waste reduction and diversion efforts by New Hampshire businesses and municipalities. Grant programs may be used to support infrastructure, as well as outreach and technical assistance programs.”

Grants to Increase Food Waste Diversion & Recycling Could Help NH Municipalities Save Money

NRRA maintains a [comprehensive map](#) on its website showing all municipalities in NH that current provide food waste diversion programs for their residents, as well as private businesses and farms that offer such services. Fewer than two dozen municipalities in NH provide food waste diversion programs for their residents. One example is the City of Lebanon. When the City of Lebanon implemented a pilot project to begin composting food waste from residents, the City benefited from a 30% savings from composting over landfilling that waste in Lebanon’s landfill. Fewer than two dozen businesses, including farms, provide food waste services in NH. Grants and technical assistance focused on food waste diversion and recycling could help municipalities and private businesses start or improve programs to save communities money.

Sincerely,



Reagan Bissonnette
Executive Director