

# NEW MEXICO ORGANICS RECYCLING ORGANIZATION

## ORGANICS POSITION STATEMENT MAY 19, 2010

### ISSUE BACKGROUND

Organic materials comprise a significant portion of our waste stream and are one of the most readily diverted materials, with little processing expense and the ability to manage the material on a local level as two immediate benefits.

In 2008, according to the New Mexico Environment Department Solid Waste Annual Report, 45,279 tons of brush and green waste were composted as well 6,488 tons of that material also being beneficially used (wood was chipped and used as daily landfill cover or landscaping). Using U.S. EPA figures, 12.4% of waste generated comes from yard trimmings, wood waste represents another 5.5% and 12.9% comes from food scraps. Yard trimmings typically take up a large volume of space with tree and limb trimmings. This of course varies slightly by site and state.

As stated in a 2010 report in response to SM 60, a memorial requesting the investigation of increased woody material utilization by state agencies, there are a myriad of benefits to diverting organic material waste.

"Enormous landfill and atmospheric benefits can be realized through utilizing wood chip resources by saving landfill space and reducing quantities of methane produced by the uncontrolled decomposition of the wood in landfills. Methane is an explosive gas and is 30-60 times more potent as a greenhouse gas than is CO<sub>2</sub>. Numerous watershed health benefits can also be reaped by wood chip utilization.

Each organics recycling alternative approach offers benefits beyond the diversion of solid waste away from landfills. Horticultural reuse of stabilized organic matter improves soil stability, inhibiting erosion, and enhances soil fertility, reducing requirements for costly water, pesticides and fertilizers. Mulch is a commodity that can also be marketed with very limited processing costs for erosion control, weed control water retention, or beautification to generate direct revenue."

### NMORO POSITION

The New Mexico Organics Recycling Organization encourages local communities to develop cost-effective programs to divert organic material (including yard, food, manure, mortality, agricultural and biosolids waste) from landfills. Removing organics from the waste stream has the following benefits: conserves landfill space, enables utilization of a valuable resource, and avoids greenhouse gas (methane) creation. These programs should consider the following components:

1. Develop Local Ordinances to Encourage a Soft Ban Of and Provide Price Incentives to Reduce and Divert Organics From Landfills. A soft ban requests customers to voluntarily comply with a material ban. The ban can be written into local ordinance or simply added to signage and does not have penalties or enforcement. Price incentives would provide a reduced tip fee for sorted organic material.
  - a. Don't "Ban without a Plan" e.g. have a stable organics diversion program in place first
  - b. Reduce Organic Material Tipping Fees at Disposal Sites as an Incentive to Divert
  - c. Collaborate with public and private sector stakeholders to develop regional organics diversion plans that may include:

- i. Identify Targeted Organics Types. Estimate Current Generation and Diversion Rates. Use the percentages above as baseline percentages of your waste stream to identify targeted organic materials.
- ii. Encourage Homeowner Diversion Type Options (e.g. backyard composting). Refer to New Mexico Environment Department: Solid Waste Bureau brochure (online), Bernalillo County Extension Office Master Composter program (online)
- iii. Identify and Develop Community Collection and/or Processing Centers (a complete list of currently registered Composting Facilities is located at NMED:SWB website)
- iv. Identify and Develop Surrounding Composting Facilities (private and/or public)
- v. Identify and Develop Public/Private Partnerships
- vi. Develop Local End Use Programs
- vii. Develop Public Outreach/Public Relations Program Regarding Reasons to Keep Organics out of Landfills (list existing web sites & Master Composters)
- viii. Adopt “Best Management Practice” Guidelines (Refer to EPA Composting Website, On-Farm Composting book, and NMED/NMRC Compost Facility Operator Certification Course)
- ix. Review and Update State and Local Solid Waste Ordinances, Registration Regulations and Zoning Requirements to Eliminate Obstacles to Composting (NMORO can assist with compliance issues)

**Guidance Resources:**

**City of Albuquerque Climate Action Plan:** Organic Waste Management section (page 45) [www.cabq.gov/cap](http://www.cabq.gov/cap)

**EPA Composting Home Page:** <http://www.epa.gov/osw/conserves/rrr/composting/index.htm>

**NMED Backyard Composting brochure & other resources:** <http://www.nmenv.state.nm.us/swb/compostingmulch.htm>

**NMRC Organics Recycling Organization webpage:** <http://www.recyclenewmexico.com/nmoro.htm>

**On-Farm Composting Guide:** Available at [www.nraes.org](http://www.nraes.org)

**Assistance to Implement an Organics Diversion Program:**

**NMORO:** [nmorganicsrecycling@gmail.com](mailto:nmorganicsrecycling@gmail.com) or 505-796-8323

**NMRC:** Sarah Pierpont ([sarah@recyclenewmexico.com](mailto:sarah@recyclenewmexico.com) or 575-224-2630)

**NM Environment Department: Solid Waste Bureau:** Joan Snider ([JoanM.Snider@state.nm.us](mailto:JoanM.Snider@state.nm.us) or 505-827-0197)

**NMSU WERC IEEE Pollution Prevention Program:** Chris Campbell ([chriscam@nmsu.edu](mailto:chriscam@nmsu.edu) or 505-843-4251)