



January 14, 2021

Dear Compostable Products Users,

I am writing to give you advance notice that we have come to the difficult but necessary decision to change our policy for what we accept at CSWD's Organics Diversion Facility (a.k.a. Green Mountain Compost).

Beginning January 1, 2022, Green Mountain Compost (GMC) will no longer accept cups, plates, utensils, or foodware of any kind, even if it is certified compostable.

After 1/1/22, we will accept only:

- Food scraps of any kind
- Certified compostable bags used for lining food scrap containers
- Coffee filters & tea bags (but not "plastic" tea bags)
- Newspaper and untreated paper bags used to line food scrap containers
- Paper towels, napkins, facial tissues – only if they DO NOT contain body fluids or chemicals of any kind
- Wooden or bamboo stirrers, toothpicks (no plastic frills), chopsticks
- Uncoated paper leaf bags

Thanks to your dedication and efforts to keep food scraps out of the landfill, we are now turning more than 5,000 tons per year of food scraps into high-value compost and topsoil. These materials return nutrients to our soils, conserve water, and help reduce the use of synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides. Just as important, your efforts are reducing our community's greenhouse gas emissions instead of contributing to landfill gas emissions and leachate.

Unfortunately, the growth we've seen in incoming food scraps has brought a disproportionate increase in contamination. This includes foodware such as cups, plates, and utensils that look like compostable products but are instead made from non-compostable plastic. Despite devoting extensive time and money to the problem we are unable to completely remove these items or prevent them from being broken into tiny plastic shards that inevitably end up in our compost. The continued success of this program hinges on our ability to sell high-quality, contaminant-free compost and other soil amendments.

For answers to questions we are expecting and more about the drivers behind this decision, please see the included Q&A and the handout, "Digging Deeper: Why CSWD/GMC Will Stop Accepting Foodware on 1/1/22."

The majority of commercial composters in Vermont and the U.S. do not accept these products. We are joining them even though we realize that this decision impacts many schools, businesses, and event organizers who have invested significant time and money on compostable products. That is why we decided it was important to provide ample notice so you can adjust your budgeting and operations and use existing inventory of products. During the coming year, we will learn how we can best continue to support your efforts at keeping food scraps out of the landfill.

We will be hosting a Zoom webinar on Monday, January 25, 2021 at 2:00 p.m. to provide more information on the drivers behind this decision, and to collect your questions and hear your input on how we can best support you in the coming year and beyond. We will be reaching out to you separately with information on how to sign up for that webinar.

We also invite you to send your questions and concerns to compost@greenmountaincompost.com so we can be sure to address them during the webinar or in other communications.

Thank you for your commitment to preventing and reducing wasted food, and for keeping as much of the remaining scraps out of the landfill as possible. We are committed to helping Chittenden County remain in the forefront of this effort.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dan Goossen".

Dan Goossen
Director of Composting
Chittenden Solid Waste District