

H.145

An act relating to composting

It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

Sec. 1. 10 V.S.A. § 6602(25) is added to read:

(25) “Compost” means a stable humus-like material produced by the controlled biological decomposition of organic matter through active management, but shall not mean sewage, septage, or materials derived from sewage or septage.

Sec. 2. 10 V.S.A. § 6605h is added to read:

§ 6605h. COMPOSTING REGISTRATION

Notwithstanding sections 6605, 6605f, and 6611 of this title, the secretary may, by rule, authorize a person engaged in the production or management of compost at a small scale composting facility to register with the secretary instead of obtaining a facility certification under section 6605 or 6605c of this title.

Sec. 3. 10 V.S.A. § 6605j is added to read:

§ 6605j. ACCEPTED COMPOSTING PRACTICES

(a) The secretary, in consultation with the secretary of agriculture, food and markets, shall adopt by rule, pursuant to chapter 25 of Title 3, and shall implement and enforce accepted composting practices for the management of composting in the state. These accepted composting practices shall address:

(1) Standards for the construction, alteration, or operation of a composting facility;

(2) Standards for facility operation, including acceptable quantities of product or inputs, vector management, odors, noise, traffic, litter control, contaminant management, operator training and qualifications, recordkeeping, and reporting;

(3) Standards for siting of composting facilities, including siting and operation of compost storage areas, compost bagging areas, and roads and parking areas;

(4) Standards for the composting process, including rotation, management of compost piles, compost pile size, and monitoring of compost operations;

(5) Standards for management of runoff from compost facilities, including liquids management from the feedstock area, active composting areas, curing area, and compost storage area; the use of swales or stormwater management around or within a compost facility; vegetative buffer requirements; and run-off management from tipping areas;

(6) Specified areas of the state unsuitable for the siting of commercial composting that utilizes post-consumer food residuals or animal mortalities, such as designated downtowns, village centers, village growth areas, or areas of existing residential density; and

(7) Definitions of “small-scale composting facility,” “medium-scale composting facility,” and “de minimis composting exempt from regulation.”

(b) A person operating a small scale composting facility or operating a composting facility on a farm who follows the accepted composting practices shall not be required to obtain a discharge permit under section 1263 or 1264 of this title, a solid waste facility certification under chapter 159 of this title, or an air emissions permit under chapter 23 of this title unless a permit is required by federal law or the secretary of natural resources determines that a permit is necessary to protect public health or the environment.

(c) The secretary of natural resources shall coordinate with the secretary of agriculture, food and markets in implementing and enforcing the accepted composting practices. The secretary of agriculture, food and markets and the secretary of natural resources may, after opportunity for public review and comment, develop a memorandum of understanding for implementation and enforcement of the accepted composting practices.

Sec. 4. AGENCY OF NATURAL RESOURCES REPORT ON RULES FOR
ACCEPTED COMPOSTING PRACTICES

Prior to filing a final proposal of rules under section 841 of Title 3, the agency of natural resources shall, prior to February 15, 2010, submit to the house committee on fish, wildlife and water resources, the senate committee on natural resources and energy, and the house and senate committees on

agriculture the proposed final rules required under 10 V.S.A. § 6605j for accepted composting practices. The house committee on fish, wildlife and water resources, the senate committee on natural resources and energy, and the house and senate committees on agriculture shall review the proposed final rules and shall recommend whether the proposed final rules should be amended or whether the proposed final rules should be filed with the secretary of state and the legislative committee on administrative rules under section 841 of Title 3. If the general assembly is not in session when the agency of natural resources is prepared to file a final proposal of rules addressing accepted composting practices, the agency may submit the proposed rules to the secretary of the senate, the clerk of the house, and the chairs of the house committee on fish, wildlife and water resources, the senate committee on natural resources and energy, and the house and senate committees on agriculture.

Sec. 5. COMPOSTING STUDY COMMITTEE

(a) On or before July 1, 2009, the agency of natural resources shall reconvene the composting study committee established by No. 130 of the Acts of the 2007 Adj. Sess. (2008) to review the application of Act 250, 10 V.S.A. chapter 151, to composting facilities in the state; to recommend whether certain composting facilities or categories of composting facilities should be exempt from Act 250; and to recommend areas of the state in which a

composting facility using post-consumer food residuals or animal mortalities should be prohibited from locating regardless of the size of the facility or whether a facility is otherwise exempt from the requirements of 10 V.S.A. chapter 151. The committee shall issue a final report of its findings to the house committee on fish, wildlife and water resources, the house and senate committees on natural resources and energy, and the house and senate committees on agriculture by January 15, 2010.

(b) For the purposes of this section, the composting study committee shall consist of the members appointed under the requirement of No. 130 of the Acts of the 2007 Adj. Sess. (2008) and:

(1) a member of the house committee on fish, wildlife and water resources, appointed by the speaker of the house;

(2) a member of the senate committee on natural resources and energy, appointed by the committee on committees; and

(3) a member of an environmental organization, appointed by the speaker of the house.