

STATE OF NEW YORK

2273

2025-2026 Regular Sessions

IN ASSEMBLY

January 16, 2025

Introduced by M. of A. EPSTEIN, OTIS, SEAWRIGHT, CUNNINGHAM, KELLES,
GIBBS, LEVENBERG -- read once and referred to the Committee on Environmental Conservation

AN ACT to amend the environmental conservation law, in relation to prevention and diversion of food waste

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. Short title. This act shall be known and may be cited as
2 the "state and local government food waste prevention and diversion
3 act".

4 § 2. Article 27 of the environmental conservation law is amended by
5 adding a new title 34 to read as follows:

TITLE 34

STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT FOOD WASTE PREVENTION AND DIVERSION

ACT

Section 27-3401. Definitions.

10 27-3403. Required state and municipal food service organics
11 waste management.

12 27-3405. Powers of municipalities.

§ 27-3401. Definitions.

14 For the purposes of this title, the following terms shall have the
15 following meanings:

16 1. "Agency" means any state department, agency, board, public benefit
17 corporation, public authority, or commission.

18 2. "Compostable" means all the materials in the product or package
19 will (a) undergo degradation by biological processes during composting
20 to yield carbon dioxide, water, inorganic compounds, and biomass at a
21 rate consistent with other known compostable materials and (b) leave no
22 visible, distinguishable or toxic residue, including no adverse impact
23 on the ability of composts to support plant growth once the finished
24 compost is placed in soil.

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[-] is old law to be omitted.

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1 3. "Contractors" and "lessees" mean any person or entity that has a
2 contract with an agency, municipality or local education agency for
3 public works or improvements to be performed, for a franchise, conces-
4 sion or lease of property, for grant monies or goods and services or
5 supplies to be purchased at the expense of the agency, municipality or
6 local education agency or to be paid out of monies deposited in the
7 treasury or out of trust monies under the control or collected by the
8 agency, municipality or local education agency.

9 4. "Covered food service establishment" means any premises or part of
10 a premises to which all of the following apply:

11 (a) it is operated by an agency, municipality, local education agency,
12 or any contractor or lessee of an agency, municipality, or local educa-
13 tion agency;

14 (b) it generates, from its food preparation and service, as averaged
15 over the course of the previous ten weeks:

16 (i) in two thousand twenty-five and two thousand twenty-six, over two
17 thousand pounds of food waste per week;

18 (ii) in two thousand twenty-seven and two thousand twenty-eight, over
19 one thousand pounds of food waste per week; and

20 (iii) in two thousand twenty-nine and thereafter, over five hundred
21 pounds of food waste per week; and

22 (c) it is located where food is prepared and provided directly to the
23 consumer, whether such food is provided free of charge or sold, and
24 whether consumption occurs on or off the premises. "Covered food service
25 establishments" shall include, but not be limited to, the following
26 which also meet the conditions of this paragraph and paragraphs (a) and
27 (b) of this subdivision: full-service restaurants, fast food restau-
28 rants, cafes, delicatessens, coffee shops, and cafeterias, but shall not
29 include retail food stores, convenience stores, pharmacies and mobile
30 food vending units.

31 5. "Excess food" means food that is not required to meet the needs of
32 the covered food service establishment.

33 6. "Local education agency" means a school district, board of cooper-
34 ative educational services, community college, agricultural and techni-
35 cal college, state university of New York college of technology and a
36 center for advanced technology designated pursuant to section three
37 thousand one hundred two-a of the public authorities law, and other
38 postsecondary provider of career education as set forth annually by the
39 commissioner as eligible recipients under the federal vocational educa-
40 tion act of nineteen hundred eighty-four.

41 7. "Municipality" means a village, town, city, or county, or any
42 designated agency thereof.

43 8. "Organic" means materials produced by or from living organisms.

44 9. "Organic waste" means readily degradable organic material includ-
45 ing, but not limited to, food waste, soiled or unrecyclable paper, and
46 yard waste in combination with any of the former materials. It does not
47 include biosolids, sludge, or septage.

48 § 27-3403. Required state and municipal food service organics waste
49 management.

50 1. Any covered food service establishment shall do the following:

51 (a) To the greatest extent practicable, minimize its generation of
52 excess, unused foods in addition to food scraps and organic waste
53 including, but not limited to, food trimmings and packaging;

54 (b) To the greatest extent practicable, reduce the need for disposal
55 of its generated excess, unused food, food scraps and any other compost-

1 able or organic waste, by providing it for the following purposes, in
2 descending order of priority:

3 (i) feeding or distributing excess, unused, apparently wholesome food
4 to people, such as the food insecure, through local voluntary community
5 not-for-profit food assistance or similar programs as authorized by
6 state and federal law;

7 (ii) feeding excess, unused food, or food scraps to animals as feed as
8 authorized by state and federal law;

9 (iii) composting, anaerobic digestion, or other processing of food,
10 food waste, or organic waste to generate soil amendment or other
11 products for use in agricultural, horticultural, manufacturing, or other
12 applications;

13 (c) Effectuate paragraph (b) of this subdivision by doing the follow-
14 ing:

15 (i) for management of excess foods or food scrap pursuant to subpara-
16 graphs (i) and (ii) of paragraph (b) of this subdivision, other than
17 those managed on-site, transfer, or arrange for such transfer, to
18 locations intended for their consumption or from which they will be
19 distributed for ultimate consumption; and

20 (ii) for management of organic wastes pursuant to subparagraph (iii)
21 of paragraph (b) of this subdivision, by taking actions to (A) source
22 separate organic wastes from other waste and subscribe to a basic level
23 of recycling service that includes their collection and recycling; (B)
24 recycle its organic wastes on-site or self-haul them for recycling; or
25 (C) subscribe to an organic waste recycling service that may include
26 mixed waste processing that specifically recycles organic waste.

27 (d) Provide collection and educational resources, including regular
28 periodical guidance, training, updates, signage, and flyers, for its
29 workforce and the public for the purposes of teaching and retaining
30 effective procedures for sorting materials for organics and other recy-
31 cling.

32 2. Each covered food service establishment may provide to its munici-
33 pality, planning unit, or the department, information on its practices,
34 including amounts of excess food, food scraps, or organic waste managed
35 by various methods such as those implemented pursuant to subdivision one
36 of this section, entities or resources utilized for reducing and manag-
37 ing such materials, or financing mechanisms and incentives utilized.

38 3. If the cost for a covered food service establishment to comply with
39 the requirements of paragraph (c) of subdivision one of this section for
40 any or all portions of excess food, food scraps, or organic waste
41 exceeds fifteen percent of the cost of its disposal by landfill or
42 incineration, the covered food service establishment may request from
43 the commissioner a waiver of the requirements for the portions, based on
44 documented efforts to comply. The commissioner shall review the request
45 and, if validated, grant the waiver for a period of no greater than
46 twenty-four months.

47 4. The provisions of this section shall not apply to contracts in
48 effect on the effective date of this section; provided, however, that
49 the provisions of this section shall apply to all renewals or extensions
50 of such contracts entered into on or after the effective date of this
51 section.

52 5. In the event that two or more covered food service establishments
53 share a common physical facility and share services such as
54 waste/recycling collection and hauling, dining areas and/or restrooms,
55 all facilities shall be considered to be one covered food service estab-

1 ishment for the purpose of calculating the amount of food waste as
2 provided in subdivision four of section 27-3401 of this title.

3 6. The department shall promote actions for covered food service
4 establishments to take pursuant to the requirements of subdivision one
5 of this section, and for all entities and the public to take in efforts
6 to manage excess food, food scraps, and organic waste in a similar
7 manner.

8 7. The department may collect and report information to promote
9 improved management of excess food, food scraps and organic waste,
10 including information on practices by covered food establishments, other
11 entities and the public, or lists of entities and resources providing
12 assistance for reducing such materials, facilities accepting such mate-
13 rials, or financing mechanisms and incentives available for recovery
14 practices and facilities.

15 § 27-3405. Powers of municipalities.

16 Any agency, municipality or local education agency may promulgate
17 regulations, ordinances, or laws to take any and all reasonable actions
18 necessary to implement and enforce this title. This title does not limit
19 the authority of a local governmental agency to adopt, implement, or,
20 enforce requirements on management of excess food, food scraps, and
21 organic waste that are more stringent or comprehensive than the require-
22 ments of this title.

23 § 3. Paragraph (c) of subdivision 1 of section 27-0107 of the environ-
24 mental conservation law, as added by chapter 70 of the laws of 1988, is
25 amended to read as follows:

26 (c) Such plan shall take into account the objectives of the state
27 solid waste management policy, provide for or take into account manage-
28 ment of all solid waste within the planning unit, and embody, as may be
29 appropriate to the circumstances, sound principles of solid waste
30 management, natural resources conservation, energy production, and
31 employment creating opportunities, including but not limited to:

32 (i) description of efforts of the planning unit, or any of the munici-
33 palties therein, to facilitate, participate, or assist in the manage-
34 ment of excess food, food scraps, and other organic waste in the solid
35 waste stream including, but not limited to, description of programs
36 providing (A) assistance with reducing the amount of excess food, food
37 scraps, and organic waste generated, (B) excess food to entities for
38 feeding the food insecure, (C) excess food and food scraps for feeding
39 animals, and (D) food and other organic waste to process and generate
40 soil amendment or other products for use in agricultural, horticultural,
41 manufacturing, or other applications; and

42 (ii) assessment and description of (A) known entities accepting excess
43 food donations for the purpose of providing nourishment to the food
44 insecure and estimated amounts, according to any useful categories, such
45 as perishable and non-perishable, that are available, (B) known entities
46 that accept excess food and food scraps for feeding animals, and esti-
47 imated amounts, according to available useful categories, and (C) known
48 entities that accept food and other organic waste to process and gener-
49 ate soil amendment or other products, and estimated amounts, according
50 to available useful categories.

51 § 4. This act shall take effect on the first of the month following
52 the one hundred eightieth day after it shall have become a law.