

NATURAL RESOURCES BOARD SIGNS AGREEMENT WITH VERMONT COMPOST

On August 23rd it was announced that The Natural Resources Board and the Vermont Compost Company have agreed to resolve two Act 250 cases now pending in Vermont's Environmental Court that placed VCC's future in jeopardy and created considerable controversy in recent months. If the Consent Agreement is approved by the Court, Vermont Compost will be able to continue to operate until July 2010 without an Act 250 permit, at which time Vermont Compost's operations will fall under new regulations to be enacted governing commercial composting facilities in the state.

This summer NOFA Vermont has been working hard with a number of Vermont's organic vegetable growers, businesses and organizations to mount an effective legal defense in this matter and to generate the widespread public support that helped bring about this agreement. It has been NOFA Vermont's position that the NRB's actions against VCC were unwarranted and jeopardized the success of a large number of organic farms and businesses that use VCC high-quality compost mixes. A group of these affected parties, organized as the Friends of Vermont Farming and Recycling, has raised funds and retained an attorney to represent their interests in the court proceedings. A petition calling on the Governor to direct the NRB to suspend its actions against VCC has been circulating at many of Vermont farmers markets, coops and businesses for several weeks.

This agreement is a very favorable and hard-won outcome. But it still needs to be approved by the Court. Attorneys for VCC and The Friends of Vermont Farming and Recycling are continuing to develop evidence and information in support of the agreement. It is expected that the court will take up the matter within several weeks.

A copy of the Consent Agreement and a press release announcing the agreement may be found on NOFA Vermont's webpage.

At the present time, a special study committee created by the legislature and comprised of representatives of a number of state agencies and non-profit organizations is holding meetings to draft regulations for commercial composting operations. The committee's recommendations will be considered and acted upon by the legislature in the next session. NOFA Vermont is observing and staying abreast of the committee's work and plans to be actively involved in related legislative activity next year.

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