

Organics Proposal Digestion Summary

The organics team is recommending increasing incentives for two organic management options:

- Anaerobic digestion for energy capture followed by composting/land application of digestates
- Direct composting and land application of organics

These are complementary technologies for dealing with a wide range of organic residuals including food scraps, yard waste, soiled paper, agricultural wastes, and food processing wastes.

By including both approaches in our recommendations, we provide a flexible strategy that has broad applicability for all regions of the state as well as a wide range of waste streams

This action will reduce greenhouse gasses by:

- Methane avoidance
 - Removing highly putrescible (food scraps, yard waste) wastes from landfills
- Source of green energy
 - Anaerobic digestion of organics
- Fossil fuel savings
 - Replacement of fossil fuel based synthetic fertilizers with organic sources of nitrogen, phosphorus and micronutrients
 - Potential reduction in N₂O emissions from use of organic fertilizers
 - Reduction in water use due to higher soil water holding capacity associated with use of organic soil amendments
- Increased carbon sequestration
 - Use of organic soil amendments can increase total carbon in soils

Highlights

Anaerobic digestion:

- Provide for feed in tariffs for electricity generated by anaerobic digestion

- Remove obstacles for wheeling power to potential purchasers
 - One utility may have a surplus of power to sell with no need or desire to buy renewable energy in general or power from anaerobic digestion in particular. In contrast, a neighboring utility may be aggressively in the market for all types of renewable power. Wheeling prohibits the utility from refusing to transfer green energy through it's grid to another utility that is willing to purchase that energy

Implementation Dates

Proposed changes to existing legislation re feed in tariffs can be ready by 9/1/2008

New legislation for wheeling requirements can be ready by 9/1/2008

Mechanism

Expand existing State feed in tariff program for solar energy to include energy from anaerobic digestion. In WA this is referred to as "renewable energy system cost recovery". RCW 82.16.110-140 and RCW 82.08.900 provides definitions of eligible anaerobic digestion processes

<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=82.16>

Legislation could be drafted to require utilities to wheel the power for minimal charge to neighboring utilities for a modest fee.

Synergy with Other Proposals

There is currently a proposal to expand existing feed in tariffs for wind derived power, this could be added to that proposal for a broader green energy strategy

What Needs To Be Done

It is recommended that an analysis be made as to the status of the tax incentive, its effectiveness for anaerobic digesters and whether or not to expand the definition of anaerobic digesters to include waste water treatment facilities and food processor digesters.