

June 17, 2020

Chair and Directors
Comox Strathcona Waste Management Board

Dear Chair and Directors:

Re: Organics Collection Pilot Project – Finished Compost Material Utilization

I am writing in regards to the ongoing utilization of the finished compost material produced as part of the Comox Strathcona Waste Managements (CSWM) organics collection pilot project within the Comox Valley.

As you are aware, this pilot program, operating since the summer of 2013, has been processing co-mingled food and yard waste collected from the Town of Comox and the Village of Cumberland as part of their curbside collection programs. Through Board direction, the finished compost material has been made available to member municipalities free of charge, sold to the public for \$13 per cubic meter (\$10 / yard) and utilized as cover material for the closure of the historical cell at the Comox Valley Waste Management Centre.

The relatively recent decision by the Board to proceed with the construction of a regional composting facility will enable the development of a full-scale curbside organics collection program for over 30,000 single-family dwellings in Campbell River, Comox, Cumberland and Courtenay. In anticipation of this program the pilot project's finished compost material has not been widely communicated or marketed to the public with even some holdback of material for municipal use.

Feedback and correspondence from my constituents that have purchased such material has been very positive, noting that sourcing good quality compost can be challenging. With the ongoing pandemic driving tremendous interest back into food security and vegetable gardening, this material is a very valuable product that can support our community during this difficult time by helping to address food insecurity, poverty and community health.

As the new regional compost facility is not scheduled to commence operations until 2022, there still exists adequate time and material to warrant beneficial improvements to the pilot project. While a slight price increase is scheduled for this fall, I am concerned that this valuable compost material is being predominantly used on ornamental plantings, such as flower beds, shrubs and trees. By pricing this material to reflect its true value and by implementing other suitable changes, I believe this product can serve its highest and best use in food production across our communities.

Therefore, I respectfully request the board's consideration of the following:

THAT staff bring forward a report providing a price evaluation and other relevant considerations respecting the finished compost material from the organics collection pilot project.

Sincerely,

A. Hamir

Arzeena Hamir
Director