



**VRA Member: Craig Coker, Marshall Hall
Committee: Policy
Approved/Revised Date: 3/20/20**

COMPOST USE POLICY

Policy Statement

It is the policy of the Virginia Recycling Association (VRA) to support efforts by public and private entities across the Commonwealth to use compost in landscaping, agriculture, and storm water management projects for the multiple benefits compost brings to these uses.

Reason for Policy

Composts made from the recycled organic fraction of solid wastes, brings biological, chemical and physical benefits to the soils it is added to, resulting in healthier soil, which means healthier plants, in sequestering carbon dioxide from the atmosphere for plant growth, and in boosting levels of organic carbon in the soil.

Who is/will be affected

Members, Public, Government, Farmers, Engineering and Construction Companies

Supporting Information

Compost use in landscaping, agriculture and stormwater helps to provide a spectrum of nutrients to the soil, improve its ability to absorb and retain water, and enhances plants natural drought resistance capabilities.

When applied to soil, compost helps to sequester carbon dioxide from the atmosphere by promoting photosynthesis in plants. This occurs by plants drawing in CO₂, providing energy for robust growth, which draws even more CO₂. Repeated compost application to soil also increases stockpiles of soil organic carbon.

Compost when used in stormwater management applications can improve soil rain/snow melt absorption rates which translates into less overall run off and improved runoff water quality. This has benefits to water quality-impaired waterbodies like the Chesapeake Bay.

Compost is used to control erosion by promoting plant root growth and superior soil porosity which absorbs the impact of falling rain and prevents soil from dislodging and becoming sediment. In addition, compost can be used to filter sediment in runoff, preventing sediment from reaching and impacting water bodies.

Definitions

Compost

A biologically stable material derived from the composting process.

Composting

The biological decomposition of organic matter through a process that inhibits pathogens, viable weed seeds, and odors, accomplished by mixing and piling so as to promote aerobic decay, anaerobic decay, or both aerobic and anaerobic decay.

Soil

A natural body comprised of solids, (minerals and organic matter), liquid, and gases that together support life.

Soil organic carbon

A measurable component of soil organic matter. Organic matter makes up just 2–10% of most soil's mass and has an important role in the physical, chemical and biological function of agricultural soils.

Storm Water Management

The effort to reduce runoff of rainwater or melted snow into streets, lawns and other sites and the improvement of water quality.

Contacts

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Document History

- Policy Origination Date: 2/17/20
- Revision Date: 2/25/20

Who Approved This Policy

- VRA Committee 3/20/2020
- VRA Board 5/15/2020
- VRA Members (Meeting)
- VRA Members (online vote)