

OFFERED BY COUNCILORS SHARON DURKAN, ENRIQUE PEPÉN, RUTHZEE LOUIJEUNE, BREADON, COLETTA ZAPATA, FITZGERALD, MEJIA, MURPHY, SANTANA, WEBER, AND WORRELL



CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

ORDER FOR A HEARING TO DISCUSS CITY SERVICES IN REGARD TO COMPOSTING AND THE NEED FOR INCREASED COMPOSTING SERVICES

WHEREAS, Nationally food scraps account for 22-24% of landfill matter and globally amount to about 1.4 billion tons, polluting soil and water and contributing to a warming climate due to the carbon dioxide outputs of the preparation, transportation, and management of food in addition to the methane generated by food in landfills, in fact, about 58% of all methane emissions are from landfilled food waste; *and*

WHEREAS, Data from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) show that food waste is the “single most common material landfilled and incinerated in the U.S.” even though it can be reused as a replacement for manufactured fertilizer when properly composted; *and*

WHEREAS, In 2022, the City of Boston launched a curbside composting program to make nutrient rich soil and clean energy with service to 10,000 households that have up to six units. Due to popularity, the program was expanded to 30,000 households in 2023 showing a passion amongst Boston residents; *and*

WHEREAS, In November 2022 the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection expanded waste bans to include mattresses, textiles, and commercial food waste – by consequence, the City of Boston has successfully implemented systems to enforce the ban on mattress disposal and meet the mattress recycling requirements, leading to a change in waste practices; *and*

WHEREAS, Similarly, the City’s community composting program, “Project Oscar,” began as a pilot in 2014 with just two bin locations, and has since expanded to 20 locations citywide, all available 24 hours a day; *and*

WHEREAS, The City’s contracted compost facility in Brockton, does not have the capacity for the full volume of food waste produced by current and future expansions of Boston’s compost program causing the City’s anaerobic digestion system in Charlestown to take on the excess volume; *and*

WHEREAS, Some City waste disposal services, including the composting program, do not service commercial buildings or households with seven or greater units, yet doing so will be critical to meeting Boston’s Zero Waste goals given that these larger

buildings on average produce more organic waste than smaller residential homes;
and

WHEREAS, Trash related to commercial, large buildings, and especially trash that includes food waste, is a significant factor affecting rodent populations, waste management costs, and overall sanitation challenges in the City of Boston, so Boston's large new and existing buildings need to be a proactive partner in the effort to build out composting capacity for the entire City of Boston; *and*

WHEREAS, PowerCorpsBOS provides hands on training opportunities to educate and employ Boston residents, whose service could support the expansion of a municipal composting program; *and*

WHEREAS, In 2012, Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection developed their Organics Action Plan and 2030 Solid Waste Master Plan, which set a goal of diverting 780,000 tons of food waste annually by 2030. Although the amount of waste diverted annually has increased four-fold since 2012 to 380,000 tons, this will have to double in the next five years to achieve their goal; *and*

WHEREAS, Seattle, San Francisco and many international municipalities like Hwaseong, South Korea have implemented effective waste reduction initiatives like Hwaseong's waste management system, referred to as jongnyangje, that requires food, garbage, and recyclables to be separated into color-coded bags, provides the City with a blueprint for success, providing a model for the City of Boston to follow; **NOW, THEREFORE BE IT**

ORDERED: That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council hold a hearing to discuss the city's composting efforts in relation to expanding the City of Boston curbside composting program to include commercial buildings, large buildings and possible regulations for new construction, and that representatives from the Public Works Department, the Environment Department, the Boston Planning and Development Agency, and the public be invited to testify.

Filed on: September 29, 2025