



Citizens Advisory Council

to the Department of Environmental Protection

P.O. Box 8459 • Rachel Carson State Office Building
Harrisburg, PA 17105-8459 • 717-787-4527 • Fax 717-772-2291
Please Note: Our New Fax Number is 717-772-5748

July 21, 1999

The Honorable James M. Seif
Secretary
Department of Environmental Protection
P.O. Box 2063
Harrisburg, PA 17105-2063

Dear Secretary Seif:

The Council is working with the Pennsylvania Composting Association (PACA) and others to consider strategies to promote recycling of organic materials such as yard waste, residual food wastes, wood byproducts and manure. One option under consideration by DEP is the creation of a compost coordinator position to focus greater awareness on composting efforts. The coordinator would manage composting education, promotion and technical assistance with individuals, municipalities and commercial facilities. Both Council and PACA support this position as a way to support commercial and municipal composting, remove current obstacles, and develop new solutions. A copy of PACA's letter supporting these ideas is enclosed for your information. We recommend the coordinator have some of the following responsibilities: serve as the public contact for technical and financial information; make recommendations for regulatory or policy changes; conduct regular public outreach efforts to address program needs; develop and promote composting training for state and local organizations; promote compost partnerships and regional facilities; and enhance DEP environmental outreach efforts on organics recycling.

Enhancing statewide composting efforts may be an effective way to meet and exceed our recycling goals, especially when some estimates indicate organics may comprise over 70 percent of municipal solid waste. While Pennsylvania has reached its original recycling goal of 25 percent on a statewide basis, other states such as Oregon have a 50 percent statewide recycling goal that emphasizes composting organics such as yard and food wastes. Council views organics recycling as a sensible and attainable next step for Pennsylvania to meet and even surpass its new recycling goals.

Council also recommends that organics recycling and composting be included and highlighted as part of DEP's environmental outreach efforts, such as Earth Day mailings, Agriculture Progress Days or Recycling Month in October. Just as we have been successful in the promotion of recycling aluminum, glass and newspaper, Pennsylvania needs to focus greater attention on the organics component of our waste stream. We would like to discuss this further with the appropriate staff.



The Honorable James M. Seif

- 2 -

July 21, 1999

We look forward to discussing these ideas with you and your staff. Please contact Council's Executive Director Sue Wilson at 787-4527 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,


Jolene E. Chinchilli
Chairperson

Enclosure

bcc: SWAC
PACA

JEC:SW:cas