



WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE ...
PUBLIC HEARING - COMMITTEE RECORDS

2011-12

(session year)

Assembly

(Assembly, Senate or Joint)

Committee on Natural Resources...

COMMITTEE NOTICES ...

- Committee Reports ... **CR**
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- Public Hearings ... **PH**

INFORMATION COLLECTED BY COMMITTEE FOR AND AGAINST PROPOSAL

- Appointments ... **Appt** (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)
- Clearinghouse Rules ... **CRule** (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)
- Hearing Records ... bills and resolutions (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)
(**ab** = Assembly Bill) (**ar** = Assembly Resolution) (**ajr** = Assembly Joint Resolution)
(**sb** = Senate Bill) (**sr** = Senate Resolution) (**sjr** = Senate Joint Resolution)
- Miscellaneous ... **Misc**

Assembly

Record of Committee Proceedings

Committee on Natural Resources

Clearinghouse Rule 10-128

Relating to composting of solid waste.
Submitted by Department of Natural Resources.

December 14, 2011 Referred to Committee on Natural Resources.

January 4, 2012 **PUBLIC HEARING HELD**

Present: (11) Representatives Mursau, Rivard, Nerison,
Steineke, Tiffany, Stroebel, Litjens, Molepske
Jr, Mason, Danou and Hulsey.
Absent: (5) Representatives Williams, Kleefisch, Severson,
Clark and Milroy.
Excused: (0) None.

Appearances For

- Lynn Morgan, Wauwatosa — Waste Management
- Karen Sieg, Stevens Point — Associated Recyclers of Wisconsin

Appearances Against

- None.

Appearances for Information Only

- Brad Wolbert, Madison — Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Registrations For

- John Reindl, Madison

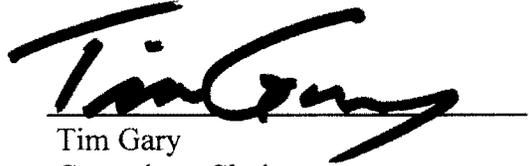
Registrations Against

- None.

Registrations for Information Only

- None.

January 14, 2012 No action taken.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tim Gary", is written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and cursive.

Tim Gary
Committee Clerk



Testimony of Department of Natural Resources

Assembly Natural Resources Committee

Clearinghouse Rule 10-128

Brad Wolbert, Chief, Recycling and Solid Waste Section
January 4, 2012

On behalf of the Department I'd like to thank you, Chairman Mursau, and the members of the committee for the opportunity to testify today on Clearinghouse Rule 10-128, the Department's proposed compost rule revisions.

Wisconsin and the nation as a whole are experiencing an explosion of interest in composting. More and more businesses and institutions that generate compostable material like food scraps and wood residuals are urgently seeking management options that keep these materials out of landfills. New uses are being found for compost, stimulating increased demand in the marketplace. At the same time, the large waste management companies are finding that compostable materials are more valuable outside of landfills than in them, and are adjusting their business models to take advantage of this opportunity.

For several years we in the DNR have been hearing from citizens and businesses as well as the composting industry that Wisconsin's rules for compost facilities are outdated. In 2008, the commercial composters and recyclers formally petitioned the Department to update and streamline the

rules and to create standards for high-quality compost to serve as a measuring stick in the marketplace. The rule revisions before you today are the result of the effort we have undertaken in response to this request. In developing the revisions, we worked closely with commercial and municipal compost operators, the University and UW-Extension, environmental groups, the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection and the Department of Transportation, a major compost user. We also sought and received valuable input from the farming community, the waste management industry, municipalities and many other stakeholders.

The proposed revisions are designed to accomplish two primary objectives. First, they attempt to streamline and update how compost facilities in Wisconsin are permitted and operated, protecting the environment while facilitating greater utilization of materials that would otherwise go to waste. Second, they introduce an entirely voluntary set of quality standards that compost producers can opt to meet in the hopes of securing a higher price for their product.

Under the proposed revisions, composters could accept a greater variety of materials and still qualify for various exemptions from certain aspects of regulation. In return, compost operators would need to keep records of temperatures and turning to promote pathogen reduction, and pay attention to stormwater pollution control at their facilities. Farmers would have an easier time accepting compostable materials from off the farm into their compost operations.

Other states are encountering the same uptick in demand for composting services, and are adjusting their rules accordingly. Making it easier for commercial composters to accept and process food scraps is the common theme of these changes. Putting this material to work by manufacturing a product out of it adds economic value and supports job growth. In addition to the positive economics, reducing the landfilling of food scraps and other decomposable organic materials reduces the need for landfill space and reduces the impact of landfills on the environment.

Mr. Chairman, this is an instance where we believe the rulemaking process worked as intended, to bring diverse stakeholders together around sensible regulatory changes that enjoy broad support. We think the proposed changes will benefit citizens and municipalities, businesses, and the environment in Wisconsin. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify here today, and I would be happy to answer any questions that you or the committee may have about the proposed rule.