



## **SB 1383: Organics Recycling Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What is SB 1383?**

Senate Bill 1383 is a statewide organic waste recycling mandate which was passed in 2016 and is intended to divert short-lived climate pollutants from landfills, reducing organic waste, food waste, and greenhouse gas emissions. You can view the legislation text [here](#).

### **How will this law help the environment?**

Landfill gas created by decomposing organic waste is a significant source of overall greenhouse gas emissions. This law helps California achieve its aggressive recycling and greenhouse gas emission goals and address climate change by reducing materials in the landfill such as food scraps and food soiled paper, which produce methane.

### **How much landfill waste will this law reduce?**

Despite the state's robust and traditional recycling infrastructure, organic materials (yard trimmings, food scraps and soiled paper) make up about half of the State's waste stream, and food waste is the largest single waste stream in California. Redirecting these resources to composting and digesting operations will save landfill space, generate energy, reduce emissions, and restore soils.

### **When does the new requirement take effect?**

Organics recycling within the County of Humboldt is anticipated to begin for residential customers in 2023. Commercial entities and businesses are already required to begin their organic recycling services.

### **Who must comply with the new law?**

The law affects **all California residents**, including those in single- and multi-family homes, commercial entities, and schools. The County is expecting to launch its organics recycling program for residents in 2023 however, supply chain issues are making it challenging to secure the necessary trucks and equipment to implement the program. Education and outreach will be provided for residents before the anticipated launch.

### **What does this mean for residents?**

When available, residents are required to subscribe to curbside organics recycling collection service or self-haul their materials to an appropriate facility. Residents should dispose of all organic waste in their green waste bin, (which is currently only used for yard waste), instead of the garbage bin, for curbside collection. Organic waste refers to food waste (including vegetable and fruit scraps, eggshells, meat, dairy, bones, and rotting food), food-soiled paper, (including pizza boxes, coffee filters, and paper napkins) and yard trimmings. Residents are also encouraged to compost at home in a clean, sanitary manner.

### **Can a resident apply for an exemption or waiver from the regulations?**

This is a statewide mandate and there are no exemption waivers granted for individual residents. Everyone is required to divert organic materials from the landfill. Some residents, however, will be exempt from the organics collection requirement in low population areas.

### **Can a business apply for an exemption or waiver?**

Business owners may be able to seek a commercial waiver if an eligible business:

- generates less than 20 gallons of organic material per week. This is called a De Minimis Waiver. Applicants will be required to certify that they generate less than 20-gallons of organics per week and are subject to an on-site inspection.
- does not have adequate space for an organic material container. This is called a Physical Space Waiver. Supporting documents will be required as evidence that the business does not have space.

### **What if I already compost all my food waste/generate no food waste?**

Residents who compost at home will be greatly contributing to the effort. However, under SB 1383, the goal is to divert all organic materials from the landfill. Certain organics, such as meat/bones, dairy, and food soiled paper such as pizza boxes, do not typically go into a backyard compost bin, therefore collection service or self-hauling to an authorized site is still required.

### **Can I self-haul my food waste?**

Yes. Residents and/or Commercial Businesses may choose to self-haul their materials to specified collection locations. Residents and businesses will be notified when and where organic materials will be accepted once the infrastructure and collection systems are in place. The Transfer Station on Hawthorne Street is being retrofitted and is expected to be able to collect food waste beginning in 2023. Additionally, there are several local community composting businesses and sites that accept food waste for composting.

### **Can I start using my yard waste bin to dispose of my food waste now?**

Although we are very happy to see our residents getting excited about upcoming residential organics recycling, residents cannot currently use their green bin for food waste. Waste processing facilities have different processing requirements for only green waste versus green waste mixed with organics (food scraps). At this time, our residents should continue placing only green waste in their yard waste bin until notified otherwise.

### **What happens to the organic waste after collecting it?**

Due to a lack of an existing permitted food-waste processing facility in Humboldt County, organic waste will likely be trucked to an organics recycling processor and turned into compost out of county as a short term solution. Green waste will continue to be collected and processed separately in-county. The County is working towards a plan to develop in-county composting options in the long term.

### **Where can I find more information?**

As the program develops, updates will become available on our website: <https://humboldt.gov/waste>. For more information on SB 1383 regulations and statewide resources, you can find it at Cal Recycle's website: <https://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/organics/slcp>.