



# Fact Sheet

## Developing Oregon's Statewide Organics Strategy

*To increase and improve the recovery of unavoidable food waste to make use of its remaining value and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.*

### Problem Statement

Food is the largest component of Oregon's waste stream and has major negative environmental impacts when it decays in landfills and creates methane, a potent greenhouse gas. Methane accounts for about 10% of all human-driven greenhouse gas emissions in the U.S.

Despite efforts by many different companies, governments, nonprofits and individuals to prevent food waste and recover food waste across the state, Oregon faces significant challenges increasing food waste recovery and reducing the environmental impacts of food waste disposal. Oregon established the goal of recovering 25% of food waste by 2020 but did not meet that goal, recovering only 10% in 2020.<sup>1</sup>

### Developing a Statewide Organics Recovery Strategy

Oregon DEQ has initiated work to develop a comprehensive statewide strategy that addresses the challenges associated with significantly increasing organics recovery and reducing the impacts of food waste disposal. This strategy will be informed by planning, research, and outreach.

### Desired Outcomes

- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and capture food waste's value for creating compost and generating renewable energy or for other uses, such as animal feed, in alignment with U.S. EPA's current guidance on highest and best use.
- Identify efficient, equitable and cost-effective methods of increasing organics recovery.
- Identify how the benefits and burdens of organics collection and processing can be distributed more equitably.
- Research how food waste recovery efforts could help other efforts to prevent food waste in the first place and support collection of nutritious surplus food for re-distribution.
- Provide opportunities for interested parties to engage in program and policy development.

#### Translation or other formats

Español | 한국어 | 繁體中文 | Русский | Tiếng Việt | العربية  
800-452-4011 | TTY: 711 | [deqinfo@deq.oregon.gov](mailto:deqinfo@deq.oregon.gov)

## Main Areas of Work

DEQ has begun work on the following issues and topics to support the development of a statewide organics strategy.

- **RESEARCH:** Key topics include contamination, recovery rates, processing capacity, end markets, existing approaches, multifamily services, and more to be determined.
- **ENGAGEMENT:** DEQ will engage with a wide range of interested parties over the next few years, including local governments, other states and nations, community organizations, collection companies, organics processors, composters and compost end users.
- **PROCESSING CAPACITY:** In July 2024, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) announced that [Oregon DEQ would receive \\$197 million](#) to work on three categories of work that are among the largest contributors to Oregon's greenhouse gas emissions: waste and materials, buildings, and transportation. A portion of these funds will support the expansion of Oregon's current processing capacity through infrastructure.
- **TRUTH IN COMPOSTING:** The Oregon Legislature adopted "Truth in Composting" (ORS 459A.965) in 2021 which prohibits cities, counties, Metro or composting facilities from "promoting for acceptance" any material that cannot be "effectively composted." The statute also requires DEQ to conduct a compostability study and produce a final report for legislative consideration by December 2026.

### For more information, contact:

[Lily Herd](#), Organics Recovery Coordinator,  
[Bob Barrows](#), Senior Waste Materials Policy Analyst

## Non-discrimination statement

DEQ does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, age, sex, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status in the administration of its programs and activities. Visit DEQ's [Civil Rights and Environmental Justice page](#).