



## Charleston County News Release

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### See Compost Facility photos:

<http://www.charlestoncounty.org/newsimages/plastic.htm>

## Council Delays Ban on Disposal of Plastic Yard Waste Bags Until October 1

During a [Special Finance Committee meeting](#) on Thursday, May 26, [Charleston County Council](#) gave unanimous consent to [Council member Joe Qualey's](#) motion to add an item to the agenda related to the disposal of plastic yard waste bags. Council then passed Qualey's motion related to the issue in both the committee meeting and the council meeting that followed.

After some discussion and questions for staff, Council extended its original vote (made during its February 15, 2011 meeting) to ban the disposal of plastic yard waste bags at Bees Ferry Landfill or the County's Convenience Centers to become effective October 1, 2011, instead of the originally scheduled date of June 30, 2011.

The delay on the implementation of the ban on plastic yard waste bags will give Council the opportunity to hear from the various municipalities and public service districts, as well as County staff, regarding the anticipated financial impact to the government entities as well as their citizens.

In 2010, the County's compost facility staff tried to manually remove the plastic bags from the yard waste, prior to grinding.

"Unfortunately, removing the bags by hand was found to be inefficient. With the sheer volume of incoming material, 59,000 tons annually, it was virtually impossible to remove all of the plastic," said Harvey Gibson, Charleston County Composting Superintendent. "Our compost facility staff will continue to work with local municipalities, towns and public services districts to prepare for the transition."

The purpose of Charleston County's Compost Program is twofold:

- 1) To divert all yard waste collected from the Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) stream, saving valuable landfill space
- 2) To process the yard waste through composting, helping Charleston County achieve its 40% recycling goal.

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- Composting is a biological decomposition process of organic materials such as leaves, garden waste, coffee grounds, grass clippings, brush and food waste into a soil amendment.
- Charleston County began composting yard waste at Bees Ferry Landfill in 1993, processing an average of 20,000 tons per year.
- Today, the 36-acre compost facility processes nearly 59,000 tons a year, diverting 100% of the yard waste received at Bees Ferry Landfill.

- The County's Composting Facility recently won the [2011 Outstanding Composting or Organics Recycling Program Award](#), during the Spring Carolina Recycling Association's 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Trade Show and Conference.
- The facility is the first in the state to be permitted by the [S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control \(DHEC\)](#) to implement two major innovations:
  - 1) Using compost as alternative daily cover in the landfill
  - 2) Conducting a food waste composting pilot, where during the first six months over 500 tons of food waste was processed.
- [Charleston County's Environmental Management Department](#) manages the disposal of solid waste for the County, and develops educational and operational programs to inform communities about proper solid waste disposal practices and procedures.
- Contained within the department are divisions devoted to specific tasks, including collection, disposal, composting, recycling and educational programs.

For more information on Charleston County's Composting Program, visit [recycle.charlestoncounty.org](http://recycle.charlestoncounty.org), or call the Recycling Center at (843) 720-7111.

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