



Action today so future generations can enjoy ocean activities

March 2, 2021

Representative Joseph M. McNamara  
Chairperson, House Committee on Education  
State of Rhode Island General Assembly  
82 Smith Street, Providence, RI 02903

RE: SCHOOL WASTE RECYCLING AND REFUSE DISPOSAL  
<http://webservice.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText21/HouseText21/H5328.pdf>

Dear Chairperson, McNamara

Clean Ocean Access supports the entitled legislation.

We have seen first-hand success by working with schools across Newport County implementing a zero-waste lunchroom initiative. Currently Melville Elementary School, Hathaway Elementary School and Melrose Elementary School compost their lunchroom food scraps. We are aiming to implement similar zero-waste lunchroom initiatives into other schools in Newport County in 2021 and 2022.

The first step of these programs is to perform a waste audit and we agree that food service vendors should be selected with responsibility for all recycling and composting ordinances. Leftover food that is edible should be donated to feed humans, however food scraps that cannot be used for human consumption, should be composted. By composting food scraps, it creates a soil amendment that can increase agriculture yields right here in Rhode Island. We agree to put in place a "floor" for local sourced foods, as that will put demand on the agricultural industry which in turn will put demand on compost processing, and this creates a healthy environment alongside a healthy growing economy.

Responsible action with recycling and composting on land is an important step for everyone in the ocean state to become more aware of the materials being used in our daily lives and working towards zero-waste. By responsibly recycling and composting, it will as a result, bring awareness to materials that are being discarded and entering our landfill. Our landfill is expected to reach capacity as early as 2034 or as late as 2040 and creates a dire situation that could lead to considering environmentally unsound options such as incineration or large-scale anaerobic digestion.

Clean Ocean Access is committed to working with schools and businesses to create zero-waste communities across the Ocean State. We are thrilled to see the entitled legislation introduced early in the 2021 session and offer our assistance to advance the legislation to further position Rhode Island as a leader for protecting and preserving the environment through recycling and composting at schools across the state.

Sincerely,

Dave McLaughlin  
Executive Director  
Clean Ocean Access

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Clean Ocean Access • 21 John Clarke Road, Middletown RI 02842 • 401-236-2561 • [www.cleanoceanaccess.org](http://www.cleanoceanaccess.org)