

Bella Quiroa
Regarding Rhode Island House Finance Committee

05/13/25

My name is Bella Quiroa and I am a concerned high school student residing in Newport. I am testifying about how the lack of infrastructure for composting in our state has left me uncertain about my future and that of my community.

I've been closely involved with composting initiatives around the state, previously being a student intern with Clean Ocean Access, a local environmental non-profit, and now Wastenaut consulting, a small and local sustainability business. I've worked first hand in schools implementing composting programs and have seen the large amount of food waste that is able to be diverted when such a program is in place.

My knowledge of food waste and its impact on our environment has been ever growing, but my time at Clean Ocean Access is what truly enlightened me on the issue at hand. Our central landfill in Johnston is set to be at capacity in 2046, and once that date arrives, other solutions, such as "waste to energy", or incineration, are environmentally detrimental. Beyond the future impact of our landfill reaching capacity, when 19% of the waste filling it is food, there is the impact of food rotting in the landfill currently. Food rotting allows for an increase in methane emissions, creating a cycle of environmental damage including warming our atmosphere, our oceans, eroding our soils, increasing stormwater runoff, and much more. It's for these reasons I've become a dedicated advocate for composting initiatives in our state, and believe any steps towards reform of our food waste management are crucial.

Not only as a young citizen who cares for her and her community's future quality of life in Rhode Island, but as an advocate for our environment, I felt more than compelled to express my support for House Bill No. [5195](#). We have the opportunity to be proactive and prevent more harm on our environment and communities by implementing a surcharge and utilizing those profits for a compost fund. It is inevitable that we as Rhode Island residents will have to pay more to dispose of our waste when the landfill reaches its closure date, so, a surcharge now that exists to implement future composting initiatives is not so much a sacrifice, but a smart decision that will lengthen the landfill's lifespan and prevent an increase of greenhouse emissions.

Thank you Committee Chair, Representative Abney, and the House Finance Committee for your time in reading my testimony. Your consideration of these matters and passing HB No. [5195](#) as a solution is very much appreciated.