



RHODE ISLAND
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
235 Promenade Street, Room 425
Providence, Rhode Island 02908

April 7, 2026

The Honorable Evan P. Shanley
Chairman
House Committee on State Government and Elections
82 Smith Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

RE: H 7675 An Act Relating to State Affairs and Government – Composting and Organic Waste Diversion

Dear Chairman Shanley,

Thank you for providing the Department of Environmental Management (DEM) the opportunity to comment on H 7675, which would establish a Compost Fund funded through a new solid waste disposal surcharge to provide grants to encourage composting and organic waste diversion. This letter is not intended as a position in support of or opposition to the bill, but offers technical comments intended to provide clarity in the bill.

H 7675 provides definitions for several terms that are different from existing definitions already found in state law. For example, the terms “recyclable materials” and “solid waste” are both defined in R.I. Gen. Laws § 23-18.9. We recommend that existing definitions be used whenever possible to promote consistency across programs.

The legislation also provides an “opt-in” provision for municipalities to decide if they want to participate in the program including the solid waste disposal surcharge. We note that while the bill would enable DEM to use up to five percent (5%) of annual solid waste disposal surcharge revenue for administrative expenses, this amount may not be sufficient to cover resource needs associated with the program if enough municipalities do not decide to participate. Without additional resources we are concerned that we will not be able to implement the legislation’s requirements consistent with its intent.

Finally, we recommend that the effective date of the legislation be delayed beyond January 1, 2027, to ensure DEM has sufficient time to put the necessary program infrastructure in place.

We appreciate the opportunity to offer comments on this legislation and would be pleased to make ourselves available as needed. Please feel free to contact Ryan Mulcahey, DEM Director of Legislative Affairs, at ryan.mulcahey@dem.ri.gov should you have any additional questions or wish to discuss this matter further.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Terrence Gray". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "T" and a long, sweeping underline.

Terrence Gray, P.E.
Director

cc: Members of the House Committee on State Government and Elections
The Honorable Terri Cortvriend
Nicole McCarty, Esq., Chief Legal Counsel to the Speaker of the House
Lynne Urbani, House Policy Director