

Subject: FOR S2441

Dear Chair and Esteemed Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

My name is Dr. Alison Tovar, and I am an Associate Professor in the Department of Behavioral and Social Sciences at the Brown University School of Public Health, where my work focuses on nutrition, food systems, and health equity. I write to express my strong support for S2441, the Compost Fund.

This bill represents an important step toward strengthening Rhode Island's food system and addressing the growing challenge of food waste. By establishing a modest surcharge on landfill-bound waste and reinvesting those funds into food waste reduction, donation, and recycling efforts, S2441 creates a sustainable mechanism to build the infrastructure and programs our state urgently needs.

From both a public health and environmental perspective, reducing food waste is critical. Food waste represents not only a loss of resources, but also a missed opportunity to improve food access, support local agriculture, and reduce environmental impact. In Rhode Island, over 100,000 tons of food are sent to landfills each year, contributing significantly to our waste stream. With the projected closure of the Central Landfill in the coming decades, proactive investment in diversion strategies is essential.

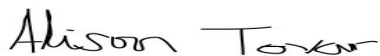
My research over the past 15 years has focused on improving dietary behaviors in communities disproportionately affected by food insecurity. Increasingly, this work points to the importance of aligning nutrition goals with environmental sustainability. Efforts to reduce food waste through composting, donation, and redistribution can simultaneously support healthier communities and a more resilient food system.

On a personal level, my family has practiced composting for many years, and I have seen firsthand how small, consistent changes can meaningfully reduce household waste. However, without broader systems and incentives, these practices remain unevenly adopted. S2441 provides a critical opportunity to scale these efforts statewide.

I respectfully urge the Committee to support S2441.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Alison Tovar, PhD (Providence, RI)

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alison Tovar". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Associate Professor
Department of Behavioral and Social Sciences
Brown University School of Public Health

Tel: 401-863-7327

Box G-S121-4, Providence, RI 02912, USA