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Oppose House Bill 4265 and 4266 – Returning Yard Waste to Landfills is a Mistake.

Summary of House Bill 4265 and 4266

- House Bill 4265 and 4266 are opening the doors to return Yard Waste back to landfills. At first it may start out being what seems like a small amount of material, but it is just the start to get the foot in the door so to speak.

Bill contents of House Bill 4265 and 4266:

- These Bills are being introduced to generate more landfill gas for the generation of electricity by allowing Yard Waste to return to landfills.
- Michigan has 50 landfills and anywhere from 3 to 35 may be able to take advantage of this as soon as a change in law goes into effect.
- Landfill gas produced by municipal solid waste is considered a renewable energy resource under Michigan Law.

Fiscal Impact

- Landfill operators pay seven cents per cubic yard of solid waste. Qualified landfills would generate additional revenue from the Solid Waste Surcharge to the DEQ. If all 1.1 million cubic yards of yard clippings were taken to qualified landfills, the revenue increase would be \$77,000 annually to the DEQ.

Michigan Needs Yard Waste to be recycled and not landfilled for some very important following reasons:

- Currently, there isn't any topsoil available in Michigan. Topsoil comes from stripping the material off of new construction job sites being generated and what do we know about construction activity right now --- there isn't any. This means there is going to be a shortage of topsoil especially this coming spring. We need the finished compost to act as a replacement for topsoil. Topsoil can be manufactured by blending in finished compost.
- **Yard Waste Compost is the only thing that we have to manufacture nutrient soil, even dirt for that matter. Man can generate methane and energy through several different ways but there is no other way to make dirt other than through the process of recycling yard waste.**
- Michigan is supposed to be green and we are taught to recycle our valued sources of material to conserve them and conserve landfill space.
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- Michigan businesses have made great investments in property, equipment and technology for the purposes of recycling yard waste and now the State of Michigan is proposing to return it to the landfill. What's next? Why should anyone make an effort to recycle and make huge investments with the possibility of it just returning to the landfill on a whim?
- Finished Yard Waste Compost is a non-phosphate based soil enhancer. All other fertilizers have high phosphate content. This contributes to contaminating our Great Lakes. People who fertilize their yards with store bought fertilizer do not realize that the run off enters sewers and goes directly to the Great Lakes. This is why seaweed is getting out of control. Yard Waste Compost does not have this problem and the finished product, which comes from the Yard Waste, would be a great replacement.
- Composting sites are operating all over the State of Michigan. Currently there are over approximately 200 sites registered on line with the MDEQ. The passing of this Bill would wipe them out and close down more businesses here in Michigan. More jobs will be lost.
- Equipment companies have made equipment to benefit processing the finished product that comes from Yard Waste Compost. These jobs will be lost and the equipment will be useless.
- **Farmers have been taught to manage manure properly by adding leaves to manure as a carbon source to protect our ground water.**
- **Food Chain ---- never interfere with our food chain as it has once again been proven by utilizing corn to make bio-diesel. This spring the price of beef is going to rise! The farmers could not afford to feed the cattle because the price of feed was to great (supply and demand). See attached article.**
- **By utilizing finished compost on our hay fields at King of the Wind Farms, in one season we went from 3000 hay bails to 15,000 bails.**
- **Leaves are used to manage our waste in solid waste water treatment plants. Leaves are blended with the material and given to farmers as fertilizer in some parts of Michigan. All this material will need to be land filled without the use of leaves. This will rob our farmers of an important use of fertilizer.**
- Home owners are just now beginning to realize the benefits of using finished Yard Waste Compost and are using it in there flower beds, gardens, lawns instead of other phosphate based fertilizers. The composting industry is making a lot of headway. To end it now would shove Michigan in a backward direction.

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- Road projects here in Michigan have been mandated that finished compost must be utilized to prevent soil erosion. Grass grows quicker when using finished compost.
- **Most important, yard waste is approximately 25% of the waste stream that has been removed from the landfills currently. Through the efforts of yard waste composting sites located through out the State of Michigan, these sites have saved the Cities and Townships from paying high rate tipping fees at the landfills. Should these Yard Waste Composting Sites shut down, then the tipping fees at the landfill will rise again over time. It would not be surprising if landfills take yard waste compost for free until they wipe out existing sites and then raise the fees when competition has been wiped out. Cities and taxpayers will need to pay higher rates again to cover the added transportation cost along with tipping fees should these Bills 4265 and 4266 pass.**

If these House Bills 4265 and 4266 should pass, then the State of Michigan will need to start importing dirt next because through the processing of yard waste is the only way in which man can manufacture dirt! There isn't any other way.

Contact the Michigan Department of Agriculture and direct them to rewrite the (Generally Accepted Agricultural and Management Practices for Nutrient Utilization) immediately should these Bills pass. Farmers have been instructed to use yard waste (leaves) as a carbon source to balance manure to protect ground water. There will not be any leaves available if this Bill passes because they will all be land filled.

In conclusion Bill 4265 and 4266 should not pass because we will be land filling a much needed valuable source material that in the end promotes protecting ground water, gives the farmers a valuable source of fertilizer which promotes food growth and simply makes everything greener!

We can survive without methane gas or electricity, but we cannot survive without healthy food and water. The better use for yard waste is for it to be recycled to protect our waters and flourish our crops. It is a mistake to landfill such a greatly needed source.

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The real reason these Bills 4265 and 4266 are being introduced is because the landfill owners want the tipping fees back from the yard waste because garbage and construction is down.

If the State needs more revenue and wants to use more of our landfill space by returning such a valued source to the landfills, then it would be better to take in garbage from Canada instead.

Composting facilities pay a \$600.00 fee every 3 years and with 200 sites that generate \$120,000.00 paid to the DEQ. The state also receives sales tax through all the sales of finished compost. Charge each compost site \$600.00 annually instead.

There should not be a price that is put on protecting our water and promoting food growth but this seems to be the way in which these Bills have been presented.

Please Oppose House Bills 4265 and 4266 and do what is right for the people of the State of Michigan.