

No Grass to Gas!

Protect Michigan's Yard Debris Landfill Ban

Senate Bill 314 and House Bill 4569 would exempt landfills with gas recovery systems from the state's longstanding ban on landfill disposal of yard trimmings.

There are many reasons to oppose these Grass-to-Landfill Gas bills including:

- **SB 314 will eliminate jobs** — There are 75 registered composting facilities in Michigan employing hundreds of Michiganders. This figure does not include the thousands of jobs serving the composting industry and using their products every day.
- **Yard debris landfill bans create jobs** — According to The Institute for Local Self Reliance, on a per-ton basis, composting creates **four** times as many jobs as landfilling or incinerating the same material.
- **Uses Michigan law to pick winners and losers** — By far the biggest beneficiary of this legislation would be one company, Granger, which operates 16 landfill gas projects in six states. On the other hand, it would jeopardize the operations of dozens of businesses and hamper the ability to grow the composting industry in Michigan at a time when composting is expanding from coast to coast.
- **Composted material is part of a rich supply chain** — Composters and other recyclers of organic waste are generating high value products used to support a variety of important industries, such as agriculture, horticulture, landscaping, stormwater management and erosion control. Markets for compost/top soil continue to grow bringing with them thousands of jobs.
- **Will not contribute in a meaningful way to Michigan's energy independence** — The increase in energy production is a negligible amount compared to our energy needs, not at all worth the jobs that will be lost.
- **Environmental benefits of lifting yard debris bans are dubious at best** — Compostable wastes in landfills create methane, a powerful greenhouse gas that is part of the cause of global climate change. Landfill gas collection systems capture only 60 to 90% at various times of operation, according to the EPA, while the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change acknowledges that over a landfill's entire life that rate may be as low as 20%. The remainder of the methane is released to the atmosphere. Reducing the amount of biodegradable materials flowing into landfills – such as through composting – is the best way to reduce methane landfill emissions.
- **Landfills do not responsibly process yard trimmings**. Contrary to landfill gas industry claims, landfills do not process yard trimmings—they bury them. Compost operations recycle the yard trimmings into compost and mulch. Compost is a valuable soil amendment product with multiple and growing markets. It is widely recognized for its ability to restore depleted soils, manage erosion, and increase crop yields.
- **Yard debris bans are good for long-term land use** — Landfill yard debris bans extend the life of landfills, thereby reducing the costs of siting, zoning, building and maintaining new landfills in the State. The bans have mitigated the need for new landfills over the last 2 decades. These bans work, demand for landfills is down while the market for quality compost and top soil is at an all time high.
- **Negligible benefits to the state**. The House Fiscal Agency found in their analysis of this legislation that even if all 1.4 million cubic yards of yard clippings processed by composting operations each year were diverted to landfills, it would result in only a \$168,000 annual net fee revenue increase for the Department of Environmental Quality.
- **Out-of-state Trash**. Lifting the ban has the potential to invite increased importation of out-of-state trash where other bans exist.

The Michigan composting industry encourages you to **oppose Senate Bill 314**. This bill will have a devastating impact on the growing composting industry in Michigan while providing no benefit to the Michigan taxpayer.