



April 27, 2011



Permitting Issues at Silver Spring's Operation

Agencies Require Composter to Adhere to Clean Practices

Thurston County, Olympic Region Clean Air Agency (ORCAA), and the Department of Ecology have listened to odor and health complaints and are actively working to solve these problems. We have drafted new permit requirements that address the problems the facility has with odors and run off management.

What's Being Done

Thurston County Environmental Health continues to closely monitor the Silver Springs facility. Thurston County requires renewal of its permit each year, and as part of the renewal this year, SSO faces stricter requirements to help ensure the facility experiences fewer problems this season. Some of the new permit requirements include:

- The facility is prohibited from accepting certain types of compost materials that seem to be significant sources of odors. In particular, SSO is prohibited from accepting food waste that is collected and hauled in stationary compactors.
- Improved monitoring and maintenance procedures are being put in place for the leachate (run off) pond to help reduce odors.
- A "Foodwaste Acceptance Criteria" went into effect to help ensure SSO only accepts food materials that can be properly composted.
- SSO has brought in new equipment to regularly turn the finished compost to help reduce odors.
- SSO is conducting more extensive sampling and testing during the composting process to gather information needed to ensure the composting process is working properly and to help identify factors that could lead to odor problems.
- SSO is limited to accepting no more than 4,160 tons of compostable material each month, which is less than half the amount they were originally permitted to handle. This restriction will remain in place until their facilities are upgraded and the new facilities are approved.

For more information about Thurston County permits, contact Gerald Tousley at (360) 867-2589.

The **Washington Department of Ecology**, meanwhile, continues to address concerns with SSO's management of excess water from the leachate pond. Ecology has required SSO to develop a management plan that includes regular monitoring of soil moisture in areas where leachate is applied to ensure application occurs at a rate preventing migration to groundwater. The leachate pond is to be emptied by October 31st and use of the irrigation system is expected to end on a permanent basis after that date.

The emission of nuisance odors from the facility is the primary concern of **Olympic Region Clean Air Agency (ORCAA)**. To address long-term operations, Silver Springs Organics submitted an application for a new permit (Notice of Construction – NOC) which ORCAA is currently evaluating.

The new NOC includes requirements for the installation of new equipment using proven technologies to improve the effectiveness of the composting process. In the meantime, SSO operates under its existing NOC permit. ORCAA requires additional controls, even under the existing permit, to help reduce odor emissions. SSO must conduct weekly samplings from the compost piles throughout the production process to ensure complete composting takes place. Additionally, the restrictions placed by Thurston County on the materials allowed into the facility should help eliminate the most problematic materials from the process. In conjunction with new maintenance and operations procedures, this should significantly reduce odor emissions.

Before issuing a new permit, ORCAA will open a public comment period and hold a public hearing. Odor complaints should be filed with ORCAA on its website, www.orcaa.org, or by calling (360) 539-7610.