



REGIONAL DISTRICT OF CENTRAL KOOTENAY

# Media Release

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For immediate release

## Organics workshop gives municipalities food for thought

Nelson, BC: Last week the Regional District of Central Kootenay (RDCK) hosted a workshop about a proposed regional-scale composting program. This program will initially target the processing of organic waste from municipal curbside collection and the commercial sector. The RDCK is asking municipal councils and boards to advise if they intend to participate in the program proposed to start by 2022.

“Organic Waste Diversion is a key component of our Resource Recovery Plan update, which will dictate our operations and capital work for the next five-plus years,” said Uli Wolf, General Manager of Environmental Services at the RDCK. “A regional-scale composting system would provide numerous environmental and economic benefits for our entire region, and those benefits are best realized if all the municipalities are on board.”

Attendees—including staff and elected representatives from RDCK municipalities and the Regional District of Kootenay Boundary—were given an update on the development of various composting options and updated cost estimates for composting operations and municipal curbside collection. They were also given an overview of the benefits of organics diversion programs: they help conserve landfill space, reduce leachate and greenhouse gas emissions, and produce a useful product in the form of compost.

The Regional District of Kootenay Boundary (RDKB) is actively pursuing opportunities for implementation of food waste organics composting for communities in the eastern portion of the region, including potentially partnering with the RDCK on their initiative. “Together, benefits can be achieved and this is another way residents can contribute to mitigating the impacts of climate change while producing a locally beneficial end product,” said Janine Dougall, General Manager of Environmental Services at the RDKB.

“The benefits of an organics program are clear, but we also know that some municipalities might have concerns with cost of implementation,” said Amy Wilson, Resource Recovery Manager. “The cost differential depends on various factors, including the level of service that already exists. While some municipalities may see a much bigger bump than others, the total cost for garbage, recycling, and organics in each municipality is anticipated to be in line with what other municipalities are paying.”

Ms. Wilson said that people across the district who already do their own backyard composting would be encouraged to keep doing so. A regional composting facility would supplement those efforts by also processing organic waste that can’t go in backyard composters, such as meat, breads, fats, and food-soiled paper. Curbside collection in the three largest municipalities would capture almost half the food waste produced district-wide. Alternatives to curbside collection simply do not divert as much, and smaller-scale technologies have many unknown costs and specifications.

“Following a screening process, the RDCK has been invited to apply for the Organics Infrastructure Program, a grant available through a partnership between federal, provincial, and local governments. The grant would fund up to two-thirds of the development of a composting facility site on an RDCK landfill with all the required permits in place,” said Ms. Wilson. “In order to build the right size facility, we need to know which municipalities will participate by collecting curbside organics and how much volume can be anticipated.”

"We know the government is heading in this direction, and future restrictions or legislation will demand even more changes to the way we manage waste," continued Ms. Wilson. "From our perspective, it's not a matter of *if* but *when* we are required to have significant food waste diversion in place. We look forward to working with our municipal partners towards a program that benefits everyone."

For more information about the RDCK's Resource Recovery Plan Update, visit [https://rdck.ca/EN/main/services/waste-recycling/resource\\_recovery\\_plan.html](https://rdck.ca/EN/main/services/waste-recycling/resource_recovery_plan.html), or contact the RDCK Resource Recovery Department at 250-352-8161 (1-800-268-7325) or [ResourceRecovery@rdck.bc.ca](mailto:ResourceRecovery@rdck.bc.ca).

*Incorporated in 1965, the Regional District of Central Kootenay (RDCK) is a local government that serves 60,000 residents in 11 electoral areas and nine member municipalities. The RDCK provides more than 160 services, including community facilities, fire protection and emergency services, grants, planning and land use, regional parks, resource recovery and handling, transit, and much more. For more information about the RDCK, visit [www.rdck.ca](http://www.rdck.ca).*

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**For further information, please contact:**

**Amy Wilson**

Resource Recovery Manager  
Regional District of Central Kootenay  
Phone: (250) 352-8178  
Email: [awilson@rdck.bc.ca](mailto:awilson@rdck.bc.ca)

**For media enquiries:**

**Maria Hypponen**

Communications Coordinator  
Regional District of Central Kootenay  
Phone: (205) 352-1531  
Email: [mhypponen@rdck.bc.ca](mailto:mhypponen@rdck.bc.ca)

**OR**

**Shiree Worden**

Records and Information Management Coordinator  
Regional District of Central Kootenay  
Phone: (205) 352-8167  
Email: [sworden@rdck.bc.ca](mailto:sworden@rdck.bc.ca)