



REGIONAL DISTRICT OF CENTRAL KOOTENAY

MEDIA RELEASE

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For immediate release

Municipal partners support proposed regional compost program

Nelson, BC: The regional-scale composting program proposed by the Regional District of Central Kootenay (RDCK) has taken a significant step closer to becoming a reality. The municipalities of Castlegar, Creston and Nelson, along with the Regional District of Kootenay Boundary (RDKB), have committed to partnering in this program, which allows the RDCK to move forward on a critical grant application for funding.

“On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank our municipal partners for making this commitment and working in the spirit of collaboration to achieve environmental and financial benefits for the entire region,” said Aimee Watson, Chair of the RDCK Board. “This proposed organics program supports the RDCK’s climate action imperative, which urges all levels of government to take action to respond to climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.”

Ms. Watson continued, “We know that making a commitment like this isn’t an easy decision, and we know there is a lot of work ahead of us to make sure the program is fair, affordable and sustainable. But this is the kind of leadership and action that’s required to respond to climate change and other stresses we are all facing.”

The program will initially target the processing of organic waste from municipal curbside collection and the commercial sector. Participating municipalities would collect food waste at the curb for composting at regional sites at the Creston Landfill and the closed Central Landfill site near Salmo.

The RDCK had asked municipal councils and boards to advise if they intend to participate in the program proposed to start by 2022.

“We have undertaken extensive research into this initiative over the past several years, and we know that the benefits of a composting program are maximized with all the larger municipal centres on board,” said Uli Wolf, General Manager of Environmental Services at the RDCK. “We look forward to working closely with our municipal partners over the coming months and years to ensure the program is as cost-effective and efficient as possible.”

The RDCK has been given approval 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 facilities on RDCK landfill sites. The grant submission is due May 22.

Approximately 30% of waste currently disposed of in landfills can be composted. The environmental benefits of composting this material include extending the lifespan of landfills, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and leachate generation, and producing a valuable soil amendment.

The Government of British Columbia's target for 2020 is to have 75% of BC's population covered by organic waste disposal bans and to lower the per capita disposal rate to 350 kg annually. The RDCK average is currently 487 kg.

The proposed curbside organics program is one element of the overarching Organic Waste Diversion Strategy (OWDS), which itself is a component of the RDCK Resource Recovery Plan update. The OWDS is intended to provide a roadmap for managing organic waste for all parts of the region. Rural areas will be assessed for programming in upcoming phases of the OWDS.

For more information about the RDCK's Resource Recovery Plan Update, visit 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.

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, water services and much more. For more information about the RDCK, visit www.rdck.ca.

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