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## B.C. broadens organic waste collection

SWR Staff | September 23, 2020

VICTORIA, British Columbia – Communities throughout British Columbia will soon be able to build organic waste processing facilities and implement organic curbside pickup programs.

The Province is launching the CleanBC Organic Infrastructure and Collection Program and providing up to \$25.7 million, over three years, to communities to develop or expand opportunities to divert organic waste from landfills.

Organic waste currently represents 40 percent of material sent to municipal landfills in B.C.

Projects to be funded are estimated to result in a reduction, by 2035, of up to 300,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e (carbon dioxide equivalent – a standard unit for measuring carbon footprints from different GHGs). This is the same as removing over 105,000 cars from the road for one year.

A key target of CleanBC is a reduction of 0.7 megatonnes of GHGs by 2030 through diverting organics from landfills, converting organic waste into useful products and capturing methane to be used as a cleaner fuel source.

“People in BC are increasingly committed to reducing the amount of waste going into landfills and supporting ways to turn organic waste into useful products like compost to enrich soil for growing more food rather than releasing more carbon into the atmosphere,” said George Heyman, minister of environment and climate change strategy.

“Some communities, especially smaller ones, can be challenged by the lack of curbside programs that make it much easier to deliver organics to processing facilities. As a result of the measures announced today, and more to come, residents will benefit from cleaner, healthier, lower carbon communities.”

The program offers two streams of funding: organic waste processing infrastructure projects and residential curbside collection programs. Eligible applicants include Indigenous governing bodies, regional districts and municipalities. Funding will be provided through cost-sharing arrangements, with the province providing up to two-thirds of eligible project costs and applicants contributing the remainder.

“Diversion of organics reduces GHG emissions and extends the lifespan of landfills,” said Maja Tait, mayor of the District of Sooke and president of the Union of B.C. Municipalities.

“This is a substantial investment by the Province that will increase the volume of organics diverted, producing more high-value compost.”

The new CleanBC Organic Infrastructure and Collection Program follows the successful implementation of a provincial-federal funding partnership, the Organics Infrastructure Program, which recently provided funding for 13 compost facility projects throughout the province.

It is anticipated the program will fund up to 18 organics infrastructure projects and provide up to 86,000 residential units with curbside collection programs. Formal applications can be submitted beginning Oct. 1, 2020, until Jan. 14, 2021. Successful recipients are expected to be announced in June 2021.

CleanBC is a shared priority between government, the BC Green Party caucus and Andrew Weaver, MLA for Oak Bay-Gordon Head, and supports a commitment in the Confidence and Supply Agreement to implement climate action to meet B.C.'s emission targets.