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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO COMPOSTING.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:**

1           SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the use of composted  
2 organic waste benefits farmers, enhances soil health and its  
3 ability to sequester carbon, and reduces waste going into  
4 landfills and the subsequent methane emitted by this waste.  
5 Compost stores macro- and micro-nutrients that improve the  
6 health of all soils in ways that protect and enhance natural  
7 systems, while imported, petroleum-based and energy-intensive  
8 fertilizers destabilize a healthy soil microbiome.

9           The legislature acknowledges that actions taken to improve  
10 soil health as a means to reverse climate change support  
11 Hawaii's goal, as outlined in the Aloha+ Challenge, of a seventy  
12 per cent reduction in the State's solid waste stream. Although  
13 the exact percentage varies from island to island, organic waste  
14 constitutes the largest single component of Hawaii's waste  
15 stream and accounts for at least fifty per cent of the materials  
16 discarded each year, including food, food-contaminated paper,  
17 and yard trimmings. As grassroots initiatives like the city and



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1 county of Honolulu's recent single-use plastic ban expand  
2 statewide, and as businesses voluntarily adopt earth-friendly  
3 plastic substitutes, the percentage of organic waste in the  
4 waste stream will grow, making the diversion of organic waste  
5 into composting programs the least costly and most direct method  
6 for the State to meet its solid waste reduction goals.

7       The legislature further finds that because organic waste in  
8 landfills is the largest source of human-generated methane, a  
9 potent greenhouse gas twenty-eight to thirty-six times more  
10 effective than carbon dioxide at trapping heat in the atmosphere  
11 over a hundred-year period, the diversion of organic waste into  
12 composting programs offers the best method to significantly  
13 reduce the amount of methane emitted from Hawaii's landfills.  
14 Scientific studies demonstrate that, because healthy soils are  
15 capable of holding twice the carbon stocks of plants, the key to  
16 building soil carbon sequestration capacity lies in building  
17 healthy soil.

18       The legislature also notes the economic benefits that  
19 accrue to Hawaii's farmers when they are able to include compost  
20 sales to their income streams.



1           Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to establish a  
2 class of artisan-scale composting operations that are sited on  
3 land zoned as industrial or agriculture and exempt from  
4 department of health regulations to support local farmers and  
5 address the need to expands the State's capacity for capturing  
6 and processing organic waste to reduce landfill waste.

7           SECTION 2. Chapter 342H, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
8 amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated  
9 and to read as follows:

10           "§342H-           Artisan-scale composting program. (a) There  
11 is established within the department a class of artisan-scale  
12 composting operations that shall be:

- 13           (1) Sited on land zoned as industrial or agricultural; and  
14           (2) Exempt from department compost permitting  
15           requirements;

16 provided that these operations do not produce vectors, dust, or  
17 odors that unreasonably impact neighbors of the operation, as  
18 determined by the department; provided further that no waste  
19 accepted shall remain on-site for more than thirty-six months.

20           No more than one exempt facility specified in this section  
21 shall be located on geographically contiguous land owned or



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1 operated by the same person. Sufficient bulking agent shall be  
2 used to provide proper aeration and control leachate migration.

3 (b) In order to maintain the compost permitting exemption,  
4 artisan composters shall maintain documentation demonstrating  
5 compliance with this section. Documentation shall include but  
6 not be limited to the amount and type of waste accepted and when  
7 and where the finished compost is land-applied. Artisan  
8 composters shall make records available for department review  
9 upon request.

10 (c) For purposes of this section, "artisan-scale" means a  
11 composting operation that accepts, measured on a monthly  
12 average, no more than one cubic yard of green waste or yard  
13 trimmings, agricultural plant materials, vegetable and fruit  
14 waste, or coffee grounds and tea leaves per month at a site  
15 controlled and owned by the waste generator with the finished  
16 compost applied and controlled by the same waste generator."

17 SECTION 3. New statutory material is underscored.

18 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

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INTRODUCED BY: *Lisa Maestas*

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**Report Title:**

Organic Waste; Composting; Artisan-scale Composting Operations;  
Department of Health

**Description:**

Establishes a class of artisan-scale composting operations exempt from department of health regulations to divert organic materials from Hawaii's landfills.

*The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.*

