



September 8, 2009



The Honourable John Gerretsen  
Minister of the Environment  
12<sup>th</sup> Floor, 135 St. Clair Avenue West  
Toronto, Ontario M4V 1P5

Dear Minister Gerretsen:

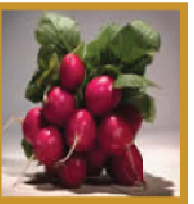


As an association representing the best interests of farmers in one of Ontario's greatest hidden jewels, the Holland Marsh, we are asking that you and your staff kindly review decisions regarding compost – and the inclusion of compost in the Municipal Hazardous Special Waste plan, a plan that is specifically designed to “divert hazardous household wastes from landfills and sewers”.

Such a proclamation may have far deeper and greater ramifications towards agriculture than the proposed innocence of the above-mentioned statement.



We – as farmers – obviously believe that compost, recycling, and reusing are in the best interests of our society. If truth be known – farmers were doing that long before society even grasped the concept. But, by declaring that compost may become a hazardous waste means that a millennia of best management practices, of farmers using compost to revitalize the land, will be placed in jeopardy due to governmental regulations seeking to restrict, rightly so, potential poisons onto an urban environment.



However, compost is the “essence” of healthy soils – which are your ministry's words, not mine. “Amongst its man benefits, compost provides nourishment for plant growth, helps to restore and enhance soil vitality, reduces water usage as well as prevents soil erosion, run-off, and improves water quality.” Again, words from your ministry.



It is our hope that your ministry does, indeed, reconsider the place that compost holds within everyday society – and specifically, the heart of agriculture and reconsiders any decision which would see compost deemed a hazardous waste, with the long-term ramifications being that agriculture and farmers may one day need to deal with the idea that spreading compost on their lands is somehow poisoning our most precious resource: farmlands.

Sincerely

Alex Makarenko  
Chair, Holland Marsh Growers' Association

cc: Dalton McGuinty, Premier of Ontario  
Leona Dombrowsky, Minister of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs  
Bette Jean Crews, President, Ontario Federation of Agriculture  
Brenda Lammens, Chair, OFVGA

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