

**Testimony of Randy Tucker, Legislative Affairs Manager  
In Support of Senate Bill 462  
Senate Committee on Rural Communities and Economic Development  
April 9, 2013**



Chair Roblan and members of the Committee:

Metro is the regional government of the Portland metropolitan area, serving a population of 1.5 million people. Our major responsibilities include managing the region's solid waste and providing services and educational resources to protect the environment and conserve resources.

Yard debris and food scrap composting is an important part of Metro's plan to reach state recycling and waste reduction goals. Metro believes the public processes set out in SB 462 will promote the appropriate siting and proper operation of compost facilities, thereby helping us achieve those goals.

There has been great progress both in the Portland metropolitan region and elsewhere in the state in developing yard debris collection programs and expanding the capacity for composting yard debris. Six yard debris processing facilities and seventeen facilities that reload yard debris now operate successfully in our region. The Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and local governments worked for many years to develop regulatory responses to problems arising from such facilities. These measures include responding to complaints, requiring upgrades to facility operations and establishing procedures to deal with odors.

Efforts in our region and other parts of the state are now turning toward developing a successful system of food scrap recovery for both the residential and commercial sectors. However, siting facilities to process these materials in or near the Portland region is becoming very difficult. Existing yard debris composting facilities are being encroached upon by urban development and limited industrial land is available where such facilities can be sited as an outright use. Though the addition of food waste to compost facility feed stocks may not necessarily cause additional problems – other factors such as the volume of material being managed or improper operation of the facility are sometimes the cause – we know it does create public concern.

We believe that the preapplication process required by SB 462 will give local governments and the DEQ a better opportunity to ensure the proposed facility operator has adequately considered operational and regulatory issues. We also believe the community meeting and outreach requirements will provide an early opportunity for members of the public to voice concerns they may have about the facility.

We want to thank Senator Starr and Senator Olsen for bringing together a work group of interested parties to share their views on this matter and for taking comments on the development of this bill.

As the elected regional government in the Portland metropolitan area, Metro works with communities, businesses and residents to create a vibrant and sustainable region for all. HB 462 supports that mission and we urge your support.