

September 30, 2005



Ms. Siobhán Nic Thighearnáin,
Waste Infrastructure & Regulation Section,
Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government,
Custom House,
Dublin 1.

**Re: Draft WASTE MANAGEMENT (FACILITY PERMIT and REGISTRATION)
REGULATIONS, 2005**

Dear Ms. Nic Thighearnáin

Cré is the Association representing the interests of the composting industry in Ireland. Cré wishes to make comment on the Draft Waste Management (Facility Permit And Registration) Regulations, 2005.

1. Volumes and tonnages

The Draft 2005 Regulations state; *“ACTIVITIES SUBJECT TO WASTE FACILITY PERMIT APPLICATION TO A LOCAL AUTHORITY – The composting of waste at a facility where the amount of compost and waste held at the facility does not exceed 1000 cubic metres at any time or the annual intake shall not exceed 25,000 tonnes.”*

Cré welcomes the change in the Regulation that allows a composting facility operator to recover increased tonnage per annum. However, we feel that the volumetric maximum of 1,000 m³ onsite at any one time should be raised to match the increased tonnages.

1000 M³ onsite at any one time limits a composting facility operator to a relatively small annual throughput. Up to four months cycle time are needed to generate high quality, fully stabilised compost. This situation places commercial pressure upon a composting facility operator to reduce retention time and produce lower grade compost in order to maximize throughput and revenue.

Problems with this situation include;

- Large volumes of lower grade compost inhibit the development of markets for compost, and therefore the development of new composting facilities.
- Huge growth is required of the composting industry. This growth is not facilitated by current permitting arrangements. In mid-2005 Ireland has approximately 84,000 tonnes of BMW composting capacity. The Draft National Biowaste Strategy (2004) indicates a 2009 target of 351,539 tonnes of BMW composting capacity – a 400% increase in capacity. The development of new composting facilities requires the support that increased tonnage allowances will allow.
- Non-BMW streams (sewage/industrial/commercial sludge's, industrial bio-wastes, agri-manures, etc) also require the development of composting capacity under the waste permit system.

While Cré would like to see increased tonnage allowed at waste permitted facilities, it is concerned that tonnage allowed not increase to such a scale that the system is abused. Suggested approaches might be to

- Link reporting, sampling, analysis, inspection frequency directly to tonnage, so that increased tonnage will lead to increased monitoring. This system would help at the smaller scale with community-scale composting.
- Link volumes allowed onsite only to fresh waste and material being composted, and not to stockpiled compost.

2. Quality

A 400% increase in National BMW composting capacity will require development and market support. The composting industry must be encouraged to produce composts of higher quality to engender market confidence. The quality classes of compost applied in the 2nd draft of Working Paper on Biological Treatment of Biowaste (or other standards as developed) should be applied as standard. When a National Compost Quality Standard is developed, facility operators should be encouraged to join.

3. Enforcement

Cré also recommends that more enforcement of the current system of permit regulation take place. The difference between the enforcement of EPA Waste Licence facility and waste permitted facilities is such that it leads to unfair competition from the less regulated waste permit sector. Ideally, Cré would like to see a single well-resourced permit enforcement body.

4. Consistency

Cré also calls for consistency between different local authorities in permit preparation and application. Conditions applied for example in terms of product quality class, frequency of sampling etc. This could be applied through development of model waste permits. These should be modelled on EPA Waste Licences as some waste permits are already.

Recommendations

1. Volumes and tonnages
 - Exclude stockpiled finished compost from volume limits
 - Tonnage and volumes should both be specified in composting permits
 - Consider linking reporting, sampling, local authority inspection frequency to tonnage throughput
 - Allow increased volumes onsite at any one time.
2. When a National Compost Quality Standard is developed, facility operators should be encouraged to join through waste permit.
3. More enforcement of existing waste permits is required of most local authorities
4. Consistency in application of waste permit conditions is required.

Regards

Conor McGovern,
Chair, Cré,
C/o Greenstar,
La Vallee House,
Fassaroe,
Bray,
County Wicklow.