



POLICY PRIORITY:

DIVERT FOOD AND OTHER ORGANICS FROM LANDFILLS

The current food waste law in Rhode Island is important, but inadequate to meet federal goals to reduce food waste by 50% before 2030. Rhode Island needs a comprehensive strategy to divert food from being wasted in landfills. Avoiding wastage of food through sustainable management solutions is critical to our environment, communities, and economy. Rhode Island has an opportunity this legislative session to recognize and protect food as a resource. With our state's landfill dangerously nearing capacity, Rhode Island legislators should:

Create Tax Incentives for Excess Food Donation

The federal Protecting Americans from Tax Hikes (PATH) Act incentivizes businesses to donate eligible food products, earning an enhanced tax deduction when doing so. Unfortunately, certain businesses struggle to utilize or fully take advantage of this tax deduction. Rhode Island has the opportunity to create state-level tax incentives for food donation that would support the agricultural economy and food producers, reduce the amount of wasted food, and improve the healthy options available to residents who use emergency food outlets. A strong policy is one in which tax deductions or credits fully offset the costs associated with food donation, including transportation.

[\(NRDC - Page 7\)](#)

Institute Wider Mandates & Greater Enforcement of RI Food Waste Law

Rhode Island's current food waste law helps address the overwhelming amount of food and organic waste that is sent to the landfill annually. The law can be made more effective by restricting the amount of organic waste that entities can dispose of in landfills or incinerators. Thus, this restriction would encourage food waste generators to explore more sustainable practices, like waste prevention, donation, composting, and anaerobic digestion. Further, Rhode Island could explore policies that phase in more food waste generators, including individuals at the household level, similar to Vermont's Universal Recycling Law. A strong policy also requires active enforcement by the state. [\(NRDC - Page 5-6\)](#)

Increase Support for Residential, Community, and Commercial Composting

State grant and incentive programs are important catalysts to reduce food from being wasted, from helping offset the costs of donation, to supporting food rescue organizations and targeted infrastructure expansion, to providing technical assistance to marketplace stakeholders. Rhode Island should include specific funding in the FY24 budget that creates grants and incentive programs that explicitly aim at reducing, recovering, and recycling surplus food. These programs should also offer free technical assistance to lower barriers to food diversion. [\(NRDC - Page 10-11\)](#)