**A** **JOINT RESOLUTION**

TO DIRECT THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL TO DEVELOP A FIVE-YEAR PLAN TO REDUCE THE STATE’S PRODUCTION OF ORGANIC WASTE.

Whereas, the State of South Carolina is facing a solid waste crisis due to international circumstances that have critically impacted its traditional recycling markets; and

Whereas, this crisis may be alleviated in part by the diversion of organic waste, which would normally be recycled or sent to landfills; and

Whereas, the State of South Carolina may pursue this reduction of organic waste by incentivizing business development in the area of composting; and

Whereas, composting businesses increase workforce training and development, reduce recycling costs to local governments, create jobs, and provide other economic benefits in local communities throughout the State; and

Whereas, as one of their primary goals, composting businesses provide the essential service of diverting organic waste, thereby reducing methane emissions and positively impacting air quality and public health; and

Whereas, composting further decreases erosion and nonpoint source pollution, conserves water during extreme drought or flooding conditions, reduces water consumption by over thirty percent for all soil types, produces organic soil amendments, decreases dependence on chemical fertilizers and pesticides, and sequesters massive amounts of carbon in the soil. Now, therefore,

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina:

SECTION 1. (A) The Department of Health and Environmental Control shall develop a five-year plan to support the technological and infrastructure development and further innovation needed to reduce the State’s production of organic waste from its 2020 level by fifty percent in the year 2025. The plan shall include, but is not limited to:

(1) a needs assessment identifying technology and infrastructure capacity gaps;

(2) an assessment of the amount of funding needed to build the infrastructure necessary to achieve the State’s organic waste reduction target pursuant to this act;

(3) the identification of financial incentive mechanisms, including, but not limited to, loans, incentive payments, credit facilities, pooled bonds, and other financing strategies, to fund and accelerate public and private capital toward organic waste diversion and infrastructure;

(4) the identification of priorities and strategies for achieving the State’s organic waste reduction target pursuant to this act, including incentives for attracting composting businesses, incentives for municipalities regarding curbside compostable waste collection, any anticipated implementation difficulties, and recommended requirements for commercial establishments, such as compostable food service ware; and

(5) any further legislative recommendations.

(B) The Department of Health and Environmental Control shall provide the plan to the General Assembly on or before December 31, 2021.

SECTION 2. (A) The Department of Health and Environmental Control shall establish a pilot program for municipal, curbside organic waste collection.

(B) The Department of Health and Environmental Control shall further establish a pilot program for the collection and disposal of organic waste in rural counties, which may involve community collection days at which individuals can dispose of organic waste free of charge.

(C) The Department of Health and Environmental Control shall report the results of and findings from these pilot programs and further recommendations for implementation to the General Assembly on or before December 31, 2021.

SECTION 3. This joint resolution takes effect upon approval by the Governor.

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