

# **STATES OF JERSEY**



## **COMPOSTING SITE, LA COLLETTE, ST. HELIER: CESSATION OF OPERATION (P.133/2008) – COMMENTS**

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**Presented to the States on 9th September 2008  
by the Minister for Transport and Technical Services**

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**STATES GREFFE**

## COMMENTS

The States have been asked in P.133/2008 to decide whether they are of opinion to request the Minister for Transport and Technical Services to cease open air composting at La Collette, St. Helier within 2 weeks.

The Minister for Transport and Technical Services firmly opposes this proposition as it would prevent the sustainable disposal of over 15,000 tonnes of the Islands waste (approximately 15% of total non-inert waste) which cannot currently be treated in any other way.

The on-going deterioration of the Bellozanne Incinerator, which is already unable to handle the current putrescible and bulky waste arisings, means that the green waste could not be treated within the incinerator.

Over 15,000 tonnes of waste are currently in storage at La Collette following the frequent breakdowns associate with the age of the Bellozanne facility, and most recently the implications of the damage to the incinerator chimney have further impeded the ability to dispose of waste this way.

Were the proposition to be approved, the green waste would therefore have to be disposed of in sealed pits within the inert waste landfill site at La Collette.

The deposit of green waste mixed with other waste in these pits would cause considerably more odour impact than is currently the case with the open wind-row compost operation, which has been acknowledged previously as following good practice by the Public Health Department and independent experts. The addition of this material to landfill pits also increases the risk of methane explosion and fire on the site which is already a hazard zone due to the presence of the fuel farm.

The Department has indicated that additional waste storage sites would be required elsewhere on the Island. If green waste can no longer be composted at La Collette these additional sites would be required earlier and with greater capacity.

The only alternative to this is for the Department to no longer accept green waste from the public and businesses and for the Parishes to make their own individual arrangements. Each Parish might then require its own composting site, which would need full licensing under the Waste Management (Jersey) Law 2006 and possibly environmental and health impact assessments.

The financial and manpower implications of closing the compost facility have not been precisely ascertained, but are likely to be considerably higher than the current cost-effective and sustainable operation. Specialist operators work at the "Open Wind Row" site, and it is unlikely that all of these could or would wish to be re-deployed to work on waste transfer operations. Green waste delivered to Bellozanne that could not be treated in the Incinerator would require additional transport to La Collette. The putrescible green waste would require the development of additional separate sealed pits at the La Collette site. La Collette has limited capacity, and should be reserved for strategic inert waste disposal. Closing the compost site would undermine further any request for export of waste material in the event of catastrophic failure at Bellozanne.

The Department has acknowledged consistently that the "Open Wind Row" operation occasionally causes undesirable odours, chiefly when shredded material in the process of composting is turned. Waste management activities on site are co-ordinated to minimise these odours. Where odours arise, or complaints are received, active management procedures are employed to modify or stop operations wherever possible, in line with the undertaking given by the Minister for Transport and Technical Services during the debate on P.76/2006 (Composting Facilities at La Collette, St. Helier: cessation). Where complaints are received, consultation with complainants and the Public Health Department is sought to determine the most appropriate course of action.

However, the number of such incidents is small, and the impact occasional and not long-lasting. During 2008, thus far, 4 strong odour episodes and 5 odour complaints have been recorded, in 2 of these no compost management activities were taking place. During these episodes, site management records indicate the immediate and considerable measures taken by operational staff to establish, address and minimise the odour impact.

The site is operated under the Waste Management (Jersey) Law 2006, under a comprehensive Working Plan, that ensures that environmental and health impacts are controlled. The compost is produced to strict quality guidelines, established by the Composting Association in the United Kingdom. The Working Plan and quality management arrangements mean that the Department considers that no significant improvement in odour management can be achieved within the operational constraints of the site and the type of operation employed.

The health impact of the site is regulated by the Public Health Department and the Minister for Health and Social Services/Chief Medical Officers will respond directly to the health concerns raised within the Proposition and Report. The Department undertakes regular monitoring for bio-aerosols – including *Aspergillus* – using approved methods, and no unacceptable levels of *Aspergillus* or other bio-aerosol has thus far been identified from this monitoring.

The Solid Waste Strategy (P.72/2005) committed the Department to developing an enclosed composting facility and a vote of £4.212 million has been allocated. A comprehensive site evaluation process, considering over 30 private and public sites all over the Island, was undertaken to confirm that La Collette was the preferred location for the composting operation by Ministerial Decision in November 2007.

Part of this assessment was to establish whether each site under evaluation was sufficient distance from potential sensitive receptors, including in relation to bio-aerosols, and many sites were ruled out as being unsuitable for this reason, whereas La Collette scored highly on this consideration. There are very few potential locations on the Island that meet the requirements for a composting site, and La Collette was a clear winner in the evaluation process.

On 28th February 2008, the Department for Health and Social Services agreed to put in abeyance the odour abatement notice issued to the Minister for Transport and Technical Services, as no useful purpose could be achieved through the Department demonstrating in Court what the Department for Health and Social Services had already acknowledged, that is the site is operated in accordance with good practice.

The Department understands that the Minister for Health and Social Services plans to bring to the States a proposition and report to amend the Law on Statutory Nuisance in the Autumn Session to overcome this discrepancy. This, together with confirmation from the Public Health Department that Waste Management Licensing will be the primary means of regulating odour, dust, noise and other environmental impacts, now allows the Department to progress consideration of an appropriate enclosed composting facility at the La Collette site.

The implications of the proposed development of the La Collette II reclamation site – part of the wider East of Albert Regeneration – have direct impact on the proposed enclosed composting facility at La Collette, and are therefore subject to on-going review. The emerging position with regard to the possible need to remove the Fuel Farm and Jersey Gas facility if the land use is to be optimised also has direct bearing on the type of compost facility that will be proposed.

Once the most appropriate solution is defined, full environmental and health impact assessments will be conducted to ensure that the current odour problem, together with many other improvements in management are achieved.

It is proposed that a planning application be submitted at the earliest possible opportunity with construction commencing in 2009 and an improved facility operational during 2010.