

STATES OF JERSEY



COMPOSTING SITE, LA COLLETTE, ST. HELIER: CESSATION OF OPERATION

**Lodged au Greffe on 18th August 2008
by Deputy G.C.L. Baudains of St. Clement**

STATES GREFFE

PROPOSITION

THE STATES are asked 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.

DEPUTY G.C.L. BAUDAINS OF ST. CLEMENT

REPORT

The composting facility at La Collette causes unpleasant smells to irritate residents— chiefly in the Havre des Pas area – and has done for a considerable time. Were this a private sector operation, I feel sure that a Statutory Nuisance Order would have been issued some time ago. Indeed, I believe the Connétable of St. Helier tried to invoke this Law, without success. One has to wonder why no action was taken.

Whilst some sympathy was extended to the Minister in the early days when in-vessel composting was being promised, I believe the nuisance has now gone on beyond a reasonable period.

In October 2006 the States debated a proposition of mine (P.76/2006 – Composting Facilities at La Collette, St. Helier: cessation) requesting ‘the Minister for Transport and Technical Services to cease the composting of all green waste at La Collette, St. Helier until such time as it can be done in a strictly odourless fashion’.

The relevant part of the debate from 26th October 2006 is reproduced below –

Deputy G.C.L. Baudains:

‘Given that yesterday the speakers who have spoken so far appeared to misunderstand my proposition but more importantly that the Minister gave an assurance that he was actively pursuing a countryside option location for composting I may wish to withdraw the proposition, Sir, but I am afraid that will depend on the Minister being able to satisfy me that the countryside option will be pursued with all possible expediency. Also that he will redouble his efforts to ensure that the smell from the existing site is minimised as much as possible. In other words it is only turned when the wind is off-shore wherever possible. In the meantime if he can give me those assurances, Sir, I would be prepared to withdraw the proposition’.

Deputy G.W.J. de Faye of St. Helier:

‘I am very happy, sir, to give the Deputy and the House those assurances’.

Sadly, those assurances achieved nothing; indeed, the nuisance has got worse.

Originally, the smell was only apparent when there was a light onshore wind. Now, there is smell even with strong winds. Furthermore, the range seems to have extended – I recall the Snow Hill area being badly affected towards the end of July.

A considerable number of people live between Snow Hill and the La Mare car park, and it is unreasonable to expect these residents to put up with this nuisance any longer. How much longer must residents put up with this? The Minister has had 2 years to sort this out, but appears to be content to allow this unacceptable situation to prevail eternally. I am therefore proposing the operation should cease within a fortnight of the debate.

Finally, I would draw attention to the danger of Aspergillus spores. This fungus is commonly found growing on dead leaves, stored grain, decaying vegetation – and compost piles. Its spores can trigger a relatively harmless allergic reaction or a much more serious destructive infection that begins in the lungs and spreads to other parts of the body. Indeed, there was a death from this fungus reported in the Lancet earlier this year. Given the number of stubborn upper respiratory tract infections being dealt with by G.P.s this year, one has to wonder if the La Collette site is either responsible for – or exacerbating – those infections.

Financial and manpower implications

Manpower implications should be neutral, and whilst the financial implications are more difficult to evaluate (would it cost more or save money?) I believe the amounts involved would be relatively minor.