

# **STATES OF JERSEY**



## **COMPOSTING FACILITIES AT LA COLLETTE, ST. HELIER: CESSATION (P.76/2006)– COMMENTS**

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**Presented to the States on 4th July 2006  
by the Minister for Transport and Technical Services**

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**STATES GREFFE**

## COMMENTS

### Introduction

The Minister for Transport and Technical Services does not support the Proposition for the following reasons.

It has already been acknowledged by the Minister and the Transport and Technical Services Department (TTSD) that the current composting facility at La Collette should be shut down as soon as a new green waste composting facility can be provided. However:

- To close the existing composting facility with immediate effect would result in there being no management of the Island's green waste (circa 13,000 tonnes per annum).
- A new enclosed composting facility will take at least 12 months minimum to construct, after all Planning approvals have been received. This means that, on current estimates, the Island would be without a composting facility until early 2008.
- Bellozanne cannot cope with potentially 13,000 tonnes of green waste being added to the existing load on the site.
- To construct a number of temporary composting facilities in different locations to carry out the composting in a proper fashion (i.e. dealing with odours and leachate), until a new facility is available, would involve greater costs and the risk of creating smell problems in other areas.

Whilst costs are not a major factor in strongly opposing this proposition, the costs of constructing individual temporary sites would be considerable. The cost of managing and operating individual sites would be greater than operating one site.

### Problems from existing composting operation

Whilst absolutely agreeing that there are odour problems from the existing composting operation at La Collette, the Department has no actual evidence of any health problems arising from it. The Health Department has provided advice on this matter, and the Department has yet to see any actual evidence of health problems.

The Department has not said that there are no smells emanating from the composting operations, but has indicated that the more unpleasant odours affecting the Havre des Pas area are caused by rotting seaweed and algae. This is not referring to the seaweed that is left on top of the sand by the receding tide, which produces a slight smell, but is referring to the seaweed and algae that gets buried in the sand by the actions of the sea. After decomposing, it gives off gas and is often uncovered by the sea action, producing strong unpleasant smells. This was acknowledged in a report of November 1998 by the WWT Wetlands Advisory Service, which undertook an Intertidal Survey – La Collette to Le Dicq, South East Coast of Jersey. It is stated in the report at 3.1 Infauna communities surveyed on the Havre des Pas shore –

**‘A social drawback of this phenomenon is that where buried drift or seasonal algae occurs on the shore, then the resulting decomposition involves the release of hydrogen sulphide, producing a foul smell of ‘rotten eggs’. This inevitably causes a public concern, as was the case at the Havre des Pas (Green Street) slipway during the present survey’.**

That was in 1998, long before composting started at La Collette.

The Department already has a number of procedures in place to minimise odours from the existing composting at La Collette and will continue to investigate complaints of odours and mitigate the problem whenever possible.

### Plant closure

If the La Collette facility were closed immediately, there would have to be alternative options available for dealing with the green waste that is produced by members of the public and all landscape gardeners, etc. (It should also be noted that much of the green waste brought to the green waste site by landscape gardeners and skip lorries, etc. is from domestic gardens.)

If green waste was not accepted at La Collette, and no other facility was available, it is inevitable that fly-tipping would occur extremely quickly and would become an Island-wide problem. The option of receiving green waste at Bellozanne for incineration has previously been answered as being a totally unsuitable solution, as it would result in overloading of the incinerator and the site.

The Bellozanne incinerator is already struggling to cope with the present load, and adding the green waste would be an increase in load of about 15%. Also, this material is wet, especially in winter, and does not burn well.

It should be noted that the TTSD has no legal obligation to carry out the composting of green waste.

### **Delay to composting facility**

It is suggested in the Proposition that there is an “impasse” because of the Minister and his Department setting their sights on one large in-vessel composting plant at the existing location, and that other issues arise, such as traffic.

There is not an “impasse”, but there will be a delay, as the proposals for a new composting facility at La Collette have been put on hold. It has been suggested by various politicians that the process of composting could be carried out more effectively, and more appropriately, by the agricultural industry. Therefore, the submission of proposals for composting to the States will be delayed, pending discussions on whether the agricultural industry could carry out the composting.

On the subject of traffic, it should be remembered that the green waste is currently being taken to and from the site at La Collette, and so locating a new composting facility there would not result in additional traffic to the site.

### **Multiple sites for composting**

Three separate composting units in the country are suggested in the Proposition, and the issue of unnecessary travel to one central site is mentioned.

The TTSD has had considerable difficulty in finding one suitable site for composting in the Island. This is not due to the size of the composting facility proposed, but because of the difficulty in finding sites that are a reasonable distance from properties, and which are in a suitable area and have sufficient space and good access.

Deputy Baudains states in his Proposition that he is not able to give an accurate assessment, but that he believes that three composting facilities would require similar manpower and financial resources to the present process. The Department has previously compared the costs of having 3 composting facilities with the costs of having one centralised facility. There are economies of scale in one centralised facility, mainly because the expensive parts of the process, i.e. the buildings, processing plant and equipment, leachate collection and odour control equipment would have to be provided for 3 separate locations. Therefore, the capital costs of 3 facilities would be greater. Also, the manpower required to operate 3 facilities would be greater, and so the annual operating costs would be higher.

Even if one centralised facility was provided, the TTSD has been considering proposals to implement local centres for collection only for green waste, at weekends. There would be one in the west and one in the east, and this would help to reduce the amount of travel by vehicles to the composting facility. It is considered that many people would choose to use these local collection centres, especially at the weekends, and this would result in a reduction in vehicle deliveries to the composting facility.