

October 1st, 2011

Consultations- Ville Lasalle
Organic Matter Treatment Centre

Honourable Commissioners,

Following the lead of Atlantic and Ontario chapters, the Sierra Club of Canada has been campaigning for improved waste management in Quebec since 2003, by commissioning comparative case studies and behavioural awareness studies on composting, as well as actively following the progress of the city of Montreal on the subject. Diversion of organic waste from landfills, reduced the release of Greenhouse Gases, replenishes healthy soil from erosion, reduces the space required for landfills, and provides the potential for energy production. Given these factors, the Sierra Club of Quebec strongly supports the city's plans to implement 4 organic waste treatment centres on the island as they are proposed. However, we feel these plans could be further improved by integration of some key suggestions.

At the end of September of this year, the Sierra Club, among other social and environmental groups, was invited to a meeting regarding the implementation of composting centers and valorisation of residual waste, with representatives from the city's sustainable development, development services and environmental departments. The proposed 4 centres, as they were described in the meeting, were assessed to employ very pertinent technology and management strategies. The technology appears that it will be well suited to the nature of the organic matter produced in a metropolis like Montreal and their design does not produce any harmful or unpleasant pollutants in operation.

One stipulation, which the city also plans on implementing ultimately, is public awareness campaigns that educate residents about the organic waste collection program. Part of the campaign could include an avenue for residents' questions and feedback so that the program can be continually improved and suited

to its users. Further studies on behavioural awareness, and encouraging action could also be useful. Youth were identified as a key group that could spread awareness in the community and across generations. This can be extended to include aspects of intergenerational communication to share the knowledge fully through the community members.

During the meeting held in late September, the city representatives mentioned the possible formation of liaison groups, composed of members of relevant organizations and interested community members, to provide constructive input into the implementation of the projects. These committees would also be very helpful in the phases of early operation, when they can provide feedback about any adjustments to be made. The Sierra Club agrees these committees would be very illuminating and volunteers to serve on such a committee, if there is an opportunity to do so.

One major concern however, does not deal with the treatment centers themselves, but rather the reduction of overall waste on the island. The plans proposed by these projects stipulate the reception of 20% of total organic waste produced on the island, from residential waste. Since a majority of the remainder of total organic waste is created by the commercial food, restaurant and institutional sectors, it would be beneficial to implement regulations that require all sectors to reduce the amount of waste that is taken to landfills by limited the tonnage that is allowed. This would motivate the private sector to participate in the appropriate organic waste and/or recycling diversion programs.

Overall, however, we congratulate the city on its efforts and direction in this avenue and look forward to hearing of progress to come.

Bana Hamze, on behalf of/

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