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DATE: December 31, 2020; Revised January 26, 2021
TO: All Residents
FROM: Town Manager Joseph J. Domelowicz, Jr.
RE: Change to curbside waste collection program – ban organics in trash stream

On November 9, 2020, the Hamilton Board of Selectmen voted unanimously to adopt a ban on organic material in the trash stream of the Town of Hamilton's curbside waste collection program and then tasked the Town Manager and the Director of Public Works to develop an implementation strategy based on the ban.

This memo is intended to explain the changes to the program and direct you to resources to assist with questions and concerns you may have about the changes. The town also recognizes that there has been some negative reaction to the announcement of the organics ban, as well as some misinformation that has circulated via social media about the burden the ban seems to impose and thus would like to clarify the following.

- **Program Intent.** The change to the curbside waste collection program is not designed to be punitive or to be overly difficult for residents to adopt. Faced with the dual challenges of the rising cost of trash collection and disposal and the negative impacts of incinerators and landfills on our environment, the Board of Selectmen along with members of our community, has searched for some time for a solution that would improve both the financial and environmental costs of the town's trash program. The cost to the town for compost is \$40 per ton, but the cost for trash disposal is currently \$83 per ton and is scheduled to increase on July 1, 2021 to more than \$85 per ton. Over the next several years the cost for the trash processing will rise to \$92 per ton.
- **Rollout.** Compost collection will begin with trash collection during the week of February 1st, 2021. Beginning with trash collection that week, the town's trash hauler, Casella, will begin looking for green compost bins next to all black bins. If a green bin is not present, Casella will still collect the trash, but will put a sticker on the black bin reminding residents of the program. This initial grace period will last until May 1st.
- **Enforcement.** Beginning May 1st, once the program is fully implemented and all reasonable efforts to educate homeowners and provide green bins have been made, black bins unaccompanied by a green bin will be left uncollected. Under the program, any black bins that are not accompanied by a green bin will initially receive a "rejection sticker" alerting the resident that the green bin is missing. There is no plan for fines or other punitive measures and the town does not plan to inspect individual residents' trash for compliance. We simply are requiring residents to place both their green and black bins (along with recycling bins) curbside for collection each week. Food waste and paper products that are contaminated with food waste are items that are not suitable for the trash stream. Such



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items should be diverted to the compost bins, as it costs the town less to have these items composted and much better for the environment.

- **Exemptions.** The town recognizes that some residents may already compost in their backyard or have some other challenge that would make compliance difficult. As a result, the town is including a program to allow such residents to seek an exemption sticker by [completing an application](#) that explains their backyard composting program or describes the extenuating circumstance. The application for an Exemption Sticker can be found on the town website or can be picked up and submitted at the DPW office in Town Hall.
- **Green Bins.** The town also recognizes that some homeowners may be missing their green compost bin. As a result, an order has been placed for more compost bins. Homeowners who do not have a green bin are asked to [complete an application](#) for a replacement bin and submit it to the Department of Public Works so that a replacement bin can be provided. We do not intend to charge for replacement bins at this point. However, time is of the essence, and requests for replacement bins will be handled on a first-come, first-served basis.

We hope this memo has answered some questions about both the intent and the mechanics behind this change to the curbside waste collection program. Additional questions, comments or concerns can be handled via email at compostprogram@hamiltonma.gov or by calling the Department of Public Works at Town Hall at 978-626-5227