

## **FCSG Statement on proposed addition of commercial food waste to sewage stream**

A proposal to build a “modular food waste receiving station” at the Drake wastewater treatment plant is included among the offers for the 2013-14 City of Fort Collins biennial budget. This facility would take food waste from CSU, the Poudre School District, and other establishments, add this waste to the sewage stream, and treat it in existing anaerobic digesters. Click [here](#) for more details. The Fort Collins Sustainability Group (FCSG) does not support this budget offer.

Anaerobic digestion produces methane from the wastewater stream, which is then burned to generate heat used in the wastewater treatment process, displacing natural gas use. This is an improvement over allowing food waste to decompose in the landfill. Landfilled food waste also produces methane, which makes its way into the atmosphere where it acts as a potent greenhouse gas. However, by adding food waste to the sewage stream, the City would mix non-toxic waste with everything else dumped into the sanitary sewer system by residential, institutional, and commercial customers. The sludge remaining after methane and water have been extracted is not suitable for use in commercial agriculture or home gardens, and is dumped on the Meadow Springs Ranch, a grassland property owned by the City located north of the Rawhide Power Station.

FCSG believes that the City should either keep food waste separate from the sewage stream in order to produce clean compost anaerobically for agricultural and residential use, or look for other ways to compost food waste. Alternatives to anaerobic digestion include aerobic processing at a central location, such as the Larimer County Landfill, or at smaller locations distributed throughout the City. Aerobic composting does not generate appreciable quantities of methane.

Adding food waste to the sewage stream would increase the amount of sludge that must be dumped on the Meadow Springs Ranch. This would decrease the life of that facility, and would represent the loss of an otherwise useful resource. We therefore urge City Staff and Council members to find a more sustainable alternative to the current proposal to build a food waste receiving station at the Drake wastewater treatment plant.