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WOTUS, EPA could be casualties of Trump administration

By Ken McEntee

The court-delayed Clean Water Rule defining the “Waters of the United States” (WOTUS), and even the U.S. EPA itself could come to an end under the administration of President-Elect Donald Trump, according to experts who keep a close eye on environmental regulations.

In the wake of Trump’s election, *Composting News* asked several experts about what they think the next four years have in store for WOTUS and environmental regulations in general. They included:

- Jay Lehr, one of the architects of the EPA who has since become a critic of the agency. Lehr, science director for the Heartland Institute, a Chicago-

(See *Trump*, page 4)



Composting human remains May God rest your soil

By Ken McEntee

Thirteen years ago, *Composting News* republished *Pushing Up Daisies*, compost pioneer Malcolm Beck’s essay about human body composting.

“In nature, all plants and animal bodies are disassembled, consumed, and returned to the Earth by the decomposing microbes, which maintains soil fertility,” Beck wrote. “Wouldn’t this also be a more respectful way to handle our deceased?”

Now, the Seattle-based Urban Death Project, is developing a new model of death care that it says “honors both our loved ones and the planet earth.” At the heart of this model is a composting system – called recomposition – that transforms human remains into soil.

(See *Human*, page 14)



Nebraska-Lincoln to study biodegradable mulch

An environmental horticulturist in the Department of Agronomy and Horticulture at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) has received a three-year, \$499,718 grant from the National Institute of Food and Agriculture to evaluate biodegradable mulch and identify opportunities to speed its degradation in soil.

UNL said plastic mulch has transformed vegetable production around the world over the last 50 years. Many vegetable producers use a

polyethylene plastic mulch due to its ability to warm the soil, conserve soil moisture and suppress weeds. However, at the end of the season, producers must remove the plastic from the soil which is challenging and

(See *Mulch*, page 17)

Highlights

- n California Safe Soil, KDC enter license agreement
- n National compost prices

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Food waste

California Safe Soil, KDC enter license agreement

California Safe Soil (CSS) has entered into an exclusive licensing agreement with KDC Ag for the nationwide development and commercialization of its patented food waste conversion and fertilizer technology. CSS said its breakthrough technology helps create a more sustainable, closed-loop agricultural system by enabling 100 percent of supermarkets' fresh food waste that can't be donated to be rapidly recycled and returned to the soil as a high-value organic fertilizer called Harvest-to-Harvest (H2H).

Kamine Development Corp (KDC)

founded KDC Ag in 2015 in anticipated support of this agreement.

"We believe this technological infrastructure can be rapidly deployed across every major city in the U.S., drastically reducing food waste and helping to transform the agriculture sector in a sustainable and profitable way," said Justin Kamine, a board member of CSS. Kamine, his father Hal and his brother Matt are all founding partners of KDC Ag.

Headquartered in Bedminster, N.J., KDC Ag plans to first focus its expansion efforts on markets in the East Coast, where it has secured long term agreements with major supermarket chains for the recycling of nearly 60,000 tons of fresh food waste per year.

Designed to closely mimic the human body's digestive system, CSS's patented technology uses heat, enzymes and mechanical action to

(See California, page 4)



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Food waste

California

From page 3

create a nutrient-dense liquid fertilizer, CSS said. Once collected, a mixture of fruits, meats, fish, deli and bakery residuals is heated, ground and pumped with enzymes, breaking it down into its' constituent elements with no added water. The liquid is then pasteurized, stabilized and blended to ensure farmers receive a consistent and pathogen free product. By not letting the food rot, CSS said, the process fully preserves foods' nutrients, effectively transforming discarded food scraps into a powerful, pathogen free liquid fertilizer immediately available to farmers to grow their next crop cycle capable of being put through farmers irrigation equipment, including drip lines.

CSS said more than 40 successful independent field trials have been conducted with H2H at major commercial farms on more than 20 different types of crops, each consistently showing significant, far-reaching benefits to farmers.

CSS said it currently has long-term contracts with more than 200 supermarkets, which can keep more than 32,000 tons of food waste from landfills per year and provide enough sustainable organic fertilizer for more than 100,000 acres of high value crops.

Legislation/Regulation

Trump

From page 1

based research organization, published a proposal two years ago to eliminate the federal EPA and secure environmental protection under the

control of state agencies. Lehr said he is confident that at least portions of his plan will be adopted under the Trump administration.

- H. Reed Hopper, principal attorney with the Pacific Legal Foundation (PLF), the Sacramento, Calif.-based public interest legal organization that has represented plaintiffs in property rights, civil rights and other cases against governments, including a lawsuit opposing WOTUS. Hopper said he expects WOTUS to be overturned, but doesn't expect EPA to be eliminated or substantially reduced in scope.

- Robert LaGasse, executive director of the Mulch and Soil Council, a trade association that represents soil and mulch producers. LaGasse said he is optimistic that Trump's planned infrastructure improvements will make transportation more efficient, and that an improved economy will boost demand for soil and mulch



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•Frank Franciosi, executive director of the U.S. Composting Council, the trade association that represents compost producers.

End of EPA?

Lehr, who was the nation's first Ph.D. in groundwater hydrology and was among the first advocates for the creation of the EPA almost 50 years ago, said he is confident that the agency will be dismantled under the Trump administration. His plan calls for a gradual dismantling of EPA over a five-year period.

"People are emailing me all over the place," he said. "They think it can be done."

Lehr believes that state control over environmental regulations will be improve the environment.

"100 percent of the work of the nation's environmental protection is done by the 50 state agencies," Lehr said. "The federal government does

nothing. The EPA has 10,000 useless employees, and all they do is look over the shoulders of the 50 states that do all of the work. Anybody in any business knows that you don't do your best work when you know some idiot is looking over your shoulder. The only time in recent memory that EPA actually got involved and got their hands dirty on the ground is when they sent several people to deal with a situation at a mining operation in Colorado (Gold King Mine, August 2015). They screwed it up and they contaminated the Animas River. EPA's response was 'we're sorry.' Anybody else would have been in jail."

Lehr said he would retain EPA's Office of Research and Development and reduce the agency's budget from \$8.2 billion to \$2 billion.

"In two years since I introduced it, there hasn't been a single person who has challenged me with regard to the logic of the plan," Lehr said. "The EPA is made up of 14 separate offices, most

of which are administrative. Only four of them actually deal directly with the environment. The Office of Research and Development is the only thing I would leave in the budget."

Lehr believes WOTUS is dead on arrival of the new administration.

"The plan was to take over every drop of water in the United States," he said. "Literally if there is a puddle on your farm and a bird lands in the puddle, the government would control that puddle. It's dead. There is zero chance that it will go through."

Despite Trump's open skepticism about global warming, Lehr doesn't anticipate a sudden reversal in Washington policy regarding climate change.

"So far I haven't read a single word that makes me believe we are going to back up at all on climate change," he said. "There is no question that Trump feels that it is a hoax, and it is the

(See Trump, page 8)

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National Compost Prices

The prices listed below are intended to indicate the value of mature compost products sold by compost producers and retailers in noted regions. Prices listed are based on surveys and publicly posted prices.

Your input on published prices is encouraged. Contact Ken McEntee, editor, at (440) 238-6603. Fax: (440) 238-6712. EMail: ken@recycle.cc. Address: 9815 Hazelwood Avenue, Cleveland, OH 44149. Notes on listings.

- Each listing includes a high price obtained, a low price obtained and an average of all prices obtained within a particular market.

- Market areas: Thirteen market areas have been targeted to provide a cross section of compost product markets in

the U.S. Where regions are not identified by a specific city, "Chesapeake" refers to the region stretching between Norfolk, Va. to Baltimore, Md. "Texas" incorporates several major cities in the state. "Northwest" represents the Seattle and Portland, Ore areas. "SF-Bay" refers to the San Francisco Bay area. SoCal is Southern California, including the Los Angeles and San Diego areas. Denver includes Colorado, Wyoming and Montana.

- "Food waste" compost: This category refers to compost products that include food waste, regional specialties and other feedstocks not specifically covered in other categories.

- Manures: Chicken manures may include other poultry

manures, such as turkey and duck manure. Cow manures may include manures marketed as steer and dairy manure. Horse manure is included in this category as well.

- Absence of a regional listing within a given category indicates not enough information for a valid listing.

Additional data will be added as more information is obtained.

- Bulk retail prices do not include municipal operations that give compost away for free.

Bulk Retail (yard)

Yard waste compost	Average	High	Low
NE	\$ 32.55	\$ 77.00	\$ 17.50
Chesapeake	\$ 24.50	\$ 30.00	\$ 17.00
SE	\$ 21.88	\$ 29.95	\$ 16.00
Florida	\$ 16.42	\$ 26.00	\$ 10.50
Cleveland	\$ 19.90	\$ 28.00	\$ 12.50
Iowa	\$ 21.57	\$ 53.00	\$ 7.50
Minneapolis	\$ 17.09	\$ 28.00	\$ 8.00
Texas	\$ 29.71	\$ 40.00	\$ 15.00
Denver	\$ 20.31	\$ 31.00	\$ 12.00
Northwest	\$ 24.05	\$ 55.00	\$ 10.00
SF-Bay	\$ 21.92	\$ 30.00	\$ 10.00
SoCal	\$ 14.75	\$ 24.00	\$ 8.00

Food waste compost	Average	High	Low
NE	\$ 39.12	\$ 64.00	\$ 17.50
Chesapeake	\$ 23.00	\$ 30.00	\$ 15.00
SE	\$ 28.11	\$ 35.00	\$ 24.00
Florida	\$ 17.50	\$ 22.00	\$ 13.00
Iowa	\$ 25.00	\$ 65.00	\$ 15.00
Minneapolis	\$ 12.33	\$ 16.00	\$ 9.00
Texas	\$ 30.21	\$ 48.95	\$ 15.00
Denver	\$ 15.00	\$ 15.00	\$ 15.00
Northwest	\$ 20.55	\$ 30.00	\$ 15.00
SF-Bay	\$ 23.61	\$ 38.00	\$ 14.00
SoCal	\$ 30.50	\$ 45.00	\$ 16.00

Leaf humus	Average	High	Low
NE	\$ 24.98	\$ 30.00	\$ 19.95
Chesapeake	\$ 27.49	\$ 30.00	\$ 23.95
Cleveland	\$ 19.27	\$ 26.00	\$ 8.00

Composted biosolids	Average	High	Low
NE	\$ 30.00	\$ 40.00	\$ 20.00
Chesapeake	\$ 24.98	\$ 35.00	\$ 12.00
SE	\$ 12.14	\$ 28.00	\$ 4.00
Florida	\$ 13.14	\$ 22.00	\$ 8.00
Cleveland	\$ 24.77	\$ 30.00	\$ 19.50
Iowa	\$ 12.67	\$ 21.00	\$ 8.00
Texas	\$ 21.28	\$ 30.00	\$ 10.00
Denver	\$ 9.00	\$ 10.00	\$ 7.00
Northwest	\$ 17.91	\$ 26.00	\$ 7.00
SoCal	\$ 13.36	\$ 22.00	\$ 3.50

Composted chicken manure	Average	High	Low
NE	\$ 45.00	\$ 50.00	\$ 40.00
Chesapeake	\$ 25.00	\$ 25.00	\$ 25.00
SE	\$ 42.00	\$ 42.00	\$ 42.00
Minneapolis	\$ 17.00	\$ 17.00	\$ 17.00
Texas	\$ 37.23	\$ 47.50	\$ 26.95
Denver	\$ 25.65	\$ 28.00	\$ 24.00
SF-Bay	\$ 16.00	\$ 16.00	\$ 16.00
SoCal	\$ 44.00	\$ 75.00	\$ 27.00

Composted cow manure	Average	High	Low
NE	\$ 45.50	\$ 46.00	\$ 45.00
SE	\$ 31.33	\$ 45.00	\$ 12.00
Cleveland	\$ 24.00	\$ 24.00	\$ 24.00
Iowa	\$ 42.00	\$ 60.00	\$ 16.00
Minneapolis	\$ 29.33	\$ 32.00	\$ 26.00
Texas	\$ 29.33	\$ 47.50	\$ 15.00
Denver	\$ 21.71	\$ 30.00	\$ 12.00
Phoenix	\$ 20.00	\$ 20.00	\$ 20.00
Northwest	\$ 23.85	\$ 33.75	\$ 17.45

SF-Bay	\$ 26.00	\$ 26.00	\$ 26.00
SoCal	\$ 17.25	\$ 24.00	\$ 12.00

Wood waste mulch	Average	High	Low
NE	\$ 21.35	\$ 38.00	\$ 12.50
Chesapeake	\$ 21.13	\$ 28.00	\$ 12.00
SE	\$ 18.78	\$ 34.95	\$ 12.00
Florida	\$ 17.50	\$ 18.00	\$ 17.00
Cleveland	\$ 25.56	\$ 36.25	\$ 14.00
Iowa	\$ 32.50	\$ 40.00	\$ 25.00
Minneapolis	\$ 26.00	\$ 35.00	\$ 20.00
Texas	\$ 16.19	\$ 27.00	\$ 9.00
Denver	\$ 18.74	\$ 25.00	\$ 12.48
Phoenix	\$ 17.61	\$ 22.95	\$ 10.00
Northwest	\$ 19.00	\$ 35.00	\$ 7.50
SF-Bay	\$ 18.14	\$ 30.00	\$ 8.00
SoCal	\$ 20.50	\$ 50.00	\$ 6.00

Colored wood mulch	Average	High	Low
NE	\$ 28.00	\$ 28.00	\$ 28.00
Chesapeake	\$ 28.67	\$ 33.00	\$ 25.00
SE	\$ 27.13	\$ 42.00	\$ 15.00
Florida	\$ 20.33	\$ 22.00	\$ 19.00
Cleveland	\$ 24.87	\$ 28.99	\$ 21.95
Iowa	\$ 30.00	\$ 30.00	\$ 30.00
Minneapolis	\$ 36.80	\$ 49.00	\$ 30.00
Texas	\$ 26.08	\$ 32.50	\$ 18.00
Denver	\$ 33.28	\$ 33.28	\$ 33.28
Northwest	\$ 35.00	\$ 35.00	\$ 35.00
SF-Bay	\$ 34.00	\$ 36.00	\$ 28.00
SoCal	\$ 32.50	\$ 35.00	\$ 30.00

Bulk wholesale (yard)

Yard waste compost	Average	High	Low
NE	\$ 21.50	\$ 48.00	\$ 11.00
Chesapeake	\$ 13.39	\$ 16.00	\$ 8.00
SE	\$ 16.66	\$ 25.00	\$ 8.65
Florida	\$ 9.75	\$ 13.00	\$ 8.00
Cleveland	\$ 12.50	\$ 15.00	\$ 10.00
Iowa	\$ 14.00	\$ 19.00	\$ 8.00
Minneapolis	\$ 12.00	\$ 17.00	\$ 7.00
Texas	\$ 17.25	\$ 24.00	\$ 9.00
Denver	\$ 13.05	\$ 14.10	\$ 12.00
Northwest	\$ 14.79	\$ 35.00	\$ 7.50
SF-Bay	\$ 13.71	\$ 22.00	\$ 7.00
SoCal	\$ 7.33	\$ 10.00	\$ 6.00

Food waste compost	Average	High	Low
NE	\$ 25.79	\$ 48.00	\$ 11.00
Chesapeake	\$ 10.50	\$ 15.00	\$ 8.00
SE	\$ 20.65	\$ 30.00	\$ 15.00
Florida	\$ 10.50	\$ 13.00	\$ 8.00
Iowa	\$ 13.40	\$ 20.00	\$ 10.00
Minneapolis	\$ 12.00	\$ 12.00	\$ 12.00
Texas	\$ 17.50	\$ 24.00	\$ 8.50
Denver	\$ 11.33	\$ 15.00	\$ 7.00
Northwest	\$ 17.25	\$ 20.00	\$ 15.00
SF-Bay	\$ 12.67	\$ 26.00	\$ 5.00

Composted biosolids	Average	High	Low
NE	\$ 15.33	\$ 20.00	\$ 10.00
Chesapeake	\$ 9.31	\$ 15.00	\$ 5.00
SE	\$ 10.93	\$ 15.00	\$ 5.00
Florida	\$ 10.50	\$ 13.00	\$ 8.00
Texas	\$ 15.99	\$ 20.00	\$ 9.00

Denver	\$ 13.00	\$ 13.00	\$ 13.00
Northwest	\$ 16.75	\$ 21.00	\$ 12.00
SoCal	\$ 10.50	\$ 17.00	\$ 3.00

Composted cow manure	Average	High	Low
NE	\$ 36.00	\$ 36.00	\$ 36.00
SE	\$ 21.38	\$ 31.50	\$ 7.00
Iowa	\$ 35.00	\$ 35.00	\$ 35.00
Texas	\$ 25.00	\$ 25.00	\$ 25.00
Denver	\$ 12.05	\$ 14.10	\$ 10.00
Northwest	\$ 22.00	\$ 22.00	\$ 22.00
SF-Bay	\$ 34.25	\$ 34.50	\$ 34.00
SoCal	\$ 5.00	\$ 6.00	\$ 4.00

Wood waste mulch	Average	High	Low
NE	\$ 15.75	\$ 33.00	\$ 8.00
Chesapeake	\$ 15.80	\$ 17.00	\$ 13.00
SE	\$ 14.60	\$ 24.95	\$ 5.00
Florida	\$ 14.00	\$ 15.00	\$ 13.00
Iowa	\$ 30.00	\$ 40.00	\$ 20.00
Minneapolis	\$ 18.50	\$ 20.00	\$ 17.00
Texas	\$ 10.83	\$ 14.00	\$ 8.00
Denver	\$ 7.66	\$ 8.32	\$ 7.00
Northwest	\$ 15.00	\$ 15.00	\$ 15.00
SF-Bay	\$ 12.33	\$ 14.00	\$ 9.00
SoCal	\$ 9.25	\$ 15.00	\$ 5.00

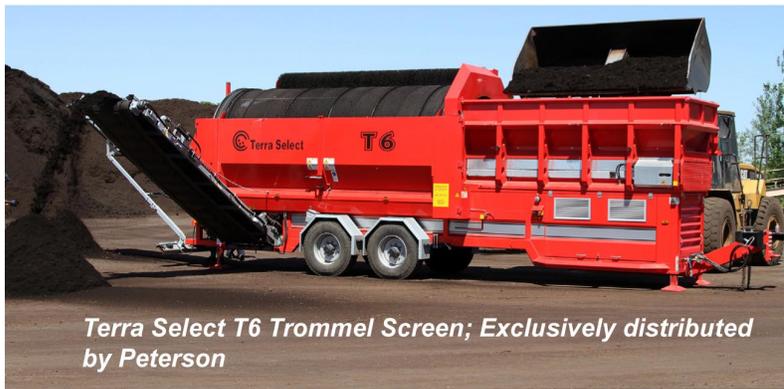
Colored wood mulch	Average	High	Low
NE	\$ 22.00	\$ 22.00	\$ 22.00
Chesapeake	\$ 20.50	\$ 22.00	\$ 19.00
SE	\$ 19.00	\$ 25.00	\$ 15.00
Florida	\$ 16.00	\$ 16.00	\$ 16.00
Iowa	\$ 25.00	\$ 25.00	\$ 25.00
Minneapolis	\$ 27.00	\$ 35.00	\$ 19.00
Texas	\$ 20.67	\$ 24.00	\$ 18.00
Denver	\$ 17.66	\$ 21.32	\$ 14.00
Northwest	\$ 22.00	\$ 22.00	\$ 22.00
SF-Bay	\$ 21.00	\$ 22.00	\$ 19.00
SoCal	\$ 22.50	\$ 25.00	\$ 20.00

Bag Retail

Compost (40# bag)	Average	High	Low
NE	\$ 6.87	\$ 8.00	\$ 4.50
Chesapeake	\$ 3.73	\$ 5.49	\$ 2.15
SE	\$ 4.00	\$ 4.00	\$ 4.00
Iowa	\$ 1.99	\$ 1.99	\$ 1.99
Cleveland	\$ 2.45	\$ 2.99	\$ 2.10
Iowa	\$ 3.12	\$ 7.99	\$ 1.50
Texas	\$ 4.25	\$ 6.99	\$ 1.99
Denver	\$ 3.59	\$ 4.75	\$ 1.73
Phoenix	\$ 4.71	\$ 5.99	\$ 2.77
Northwest	\$ 4.29	\$ 5.99	\$ 2.99
SoCal	\$ 5.39	\$ 6.25	\$ 3.90

Composted cow manure(40#bag)	Average	High	Low
NE	\$ 6.53	\$ 9.87	\$ 3.85
Chesapeake	\$ 5.97	\$ 7.95	\$ 3.99
SE	\$ 5.16	\$ 6.97	\$ 3.34
Florida	\$ 1.98	\$ 1.99	\$ 1.97
Cleveland	\$ 3.27	\$ 3.99	\$ 2.49
Iowa	\$ 2.18	\$ 2.49	\$ 1.75
Minneapolis	\$ 3.70	\$ 7.00	\$ 1.99
Texas	\$ 4.59	\$ 6.99	\$ 1.99
Phoenix	\$ 2.99	\$ 3.99	\$ 2.49
Northwest	\$ 3.99	\$ 3.99	\$ 3.99
SF-Bay	\$ 7.00	\$ 7.00	\$ 7.00

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Legislation/Regulation

Trump

From page 5

biggest hoax ever perpetrated on society, and I think he will stick with that. But I think it will take some time to slowly wind it down reasonably. Over a period of time, the more than \$5 billion a year of research money that goes to support the climate models at the academic levels will dry up. The maximum of Trump's backing off will be to assign a new committee of non-hoaxers to study the issue and come out with directives, the bottom line which will be that the climate is always changing, let's keep our eye on it, let's make sure that we are prepared for whatever happens."

Despite reports that former Goldman Sachs investment banker Steven Mnuchin – the national finance chairman for Trump's campaign – is a top contender for secretary of the

treasurer, Lehr doesn't anticipate a resurgence in carbon credits and carbon exchanges.

Goldman Sachs was once a leading proponent of a Cap and Trade system through which it hoped to be the largest player in a carbon credit exchange that President Barack Obama once estimated to be a \$646 billion business over seven years. Another major player in carbon trading was Generation Investment Management, founded by former Vice President Al Gore along with three former Goldman Sachs bankers.

"Carbon credits have never gotten off the ground," Lehr said. "I think the money that has been wasted on carbon credits and carbon exchanges is going to be reduced."

He believes tax incentives, including incentives for food waste processing technologies and green fuel production, will be eliminated under the Trump administration.

"I've always thought that turning

food waste into fuel was a great idea," he said. "But it can never compete with fossil fuel. We don't have 100 or 200 years of shale gas and oil in this country. We have 1,000 years. These (alternative) fuels are going to be a niche market. I don't want to see them go out of business but I don't want to give them any tax breaks either. I can predict for sure than in the next four years we're going to see a dramatic reduction in tax breaks on energy and a lot of things that have been around a long time."

Lehr believes Trump's cabinet will "make life better for every single industry. The people who read your magazine are going to positively influenced. If they live on tax breaks or they live on regulations that make their competitors lives more difficult, then they may not benefit. But in the long haul businesses will benefit by an economic boom."

(See Trump, page 13)

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Legislation/Regulation

Trump

From page 8

End the subsidies

LaGasse has the same hopes for a booming economy and a better business climate spurred by rolling back regulatory obstacles. He also hopes to see an end to tax credits and subsidies that favor some industries over others.

“They create inequities in the marketplace and support technologies that aren’t marketable or can’t survive in a free market,” LaGasse said.

Specifically, he says, subsidizing biomass energy diverts wood from mulch producers.

“Government subsidies - whether they are U.S. based or whether they are by foreign markets like the U.K., which subsidizes the import of millions of tons of wood pellets - take materials

out of the historic wood fiber marketplace and redirect them. Instead of depending on a heavily subsidized foreign market we need to develop our own markets. America first is not a bad idea. If we spend our money here at home and improve our infrastructure and make the marketplace a stable place to do business, how is that bad?”

LaGasse hopes the Trump administration will “take a stronger look at EPA and correct some of the errors that it has made recently.”

That includes WOTUS, which LaGasse has said “presents a big problem for anybody who wants to make changes to their property.”

“We’re in the hopeful phase that they will be rolled back,” he said. “I think people have voted for the premise of returning regulatory agencies to being more regulators and less advocates. If (Trump) curtails some of the overreaching regulation like WOTUS, more development can proceed. Housing can expand. More

jobs let more people afford housing, which creates more demand for our products.”

End of WOTUS

Hopper, lead attorney in the first lawsuit filed against the Obama administration last year to block implementation of WOTUS, said he is hopeful that the rule will be rolled back, along with climate change regulations.

“Trump has publicly stated his view that the WOTUS rule is unconstitutional, so it is likely he will pull the rule at some point,” Hopper said. “But it is equally likely the Justice Department will continue to defend the rule up until Trump takes office. The most likely outcome is that the new president will allow the Sixth Circuit (U.S. Court of Appeals) to decide the case, which almost certainly will go against the government given the Sixth Circuit’s nationwide injunction which

(See Trump, page 14)

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Legislation/Regulation

Trump

From page 13

held the rule was likely invalid statutorily and constitutionally. When that happens, Trump can pull the rule and refuse to defend it in the Supreme Court.”

Meanwhile, Hopper said he hopes Trump will roll back climate and carbon regulations, although he expects that it would take months before any changes are seen. “I think Trump is serious about scaling back regulation, especially environmental and immigration regulations,” Hopper said. “In some cases, he may do so through an executive order, perhaps within his first 100 days. In other cases, he may have to allow the agency to issue a new rule that withdraws or supersedes the existing rule. This could take a couple years. There is a lot of inertia in some of these agencies like EPA and it will take awhile for the new administration to move its agenda down the line.”

Unlike Lehr, Hopper doesn't foresee the elimination or reduction of the size of EPA.

“Even curtailing the agency seems unlikely,” he said. “So much of what the agency does is the result of entrenched, unelected bureaucrats overstepping their enforcement power. I don't see that changing no matter who is in charge at the top. Even small-government types seem to change their attitude when they get to Washington and start working in these immense agencies like EPA. I fear the most we can hope for, at least in the near future, is to hold the line on EPA or simply slow its growth.”

Hopper said Trump's lasting legacy may turn on who he appoints to the Supreme Court.

“This more than anything will make or break our country,” he said. “If Trump appoints some like-minded individual to replace Justice Scalia, at least the current balance of power on the court will remain with ongoing

protections for landowners, state's rights, and individual liberty. If, perchance, he gets to replace someone else on the bench, like Justice Ginsburg, that could provide a safeguard against big government for decades, if not generations.”

Wait and see

Franciosi said he wants to wait until Trump takes office before making any projections as to whether the new president will be a friend or foe to the composting business.

“We don't even know who the EPA (administrator) is going to be, so it's too early to say,” he said. “I can tell you that the people in the EPA who are working in resource management have been extremely cooperative and they and the USDA want to see the food scraps problem taken care of from a number of levels. From the standpoint of permitting, everything is done at the state level, so I don't see any impact there. There are some bills in the Senate on food recovery. Those bills have proposed language on infrastructure funding. It seems to me that the new administration is big on infrastructure and big on jobs, and if you look at composting compared to other waste disposal options it creates more jobs than landfilling and incineration. The Institute of Local Self Reliance has done some studies on that. So the message we need to get out is that we are a better option when it comes to building infrastructure and creating jobs.”

Franciosi said he is a “firm believer” in climate change, in contrast to Trump's view of climate change as a hoax.

“But what we do as an industry benefits the environmental tremendously, not only from a greenhouse gas standpoint, but also when you look at all of the eco-system benefits composting provides, like water saving, less pesticide, less fertilizer, better healthy soil. Those all relate economically as well as environmentally. We have been through this before with prior

administrations.”

Franciosi said the Trump administration isn't likely to support green energy, which could impact USCC members who are involved in food to biogas projects. He said, however, that most green fuel incentives are offered at the state level.

Franciosi said that from the standpoint of federal regulations, the only area that directly impacts composters is in biosolids composting.

“It's the states that are overseeing the regulations that allow composting facilities to operate, and many of them in are in the process of reviewing their regulations,” he said. “We're here to help them. We have templates for composting legislation, and if any changes are going to be made, they should be science based, not based on hearsay.”

Applications

Human

From page 1

“It occurred to me that I didn't want the last thing I did on this planet to be polluting,” said Katrina Spade, founder and executive director of the project.

Spade has never heard of Beck, the founder and former owner of Gardenville, a San Antonio-based compost producer. But she shares his view that traditional methods of cremation and burial are undesirable to the body and to the environment.

“The funeral industry gouges families,” she said. “They have to make them feel like they need a fancy coffin so they can make money. It is horrible.”

The Urban Death Project is working with Washington State University to develop a prototype composting facility using animal carcasses

“As far as I know we are the first to do a project like this,” Spade said.

Spade's interest in composting human remains developed while she was in graduate school for

(See Human, page 17)



882:66:63

872:9873:72

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Applications

Human

From page 15

architecture.

"I had an interest in decomposition that goes beyond the average architecture student," she said. "I grew up in New Hampshire and we always raised and composted our own animals, so I developed a good knowledge of composting and permaculture design."

She also became interested in the funeral industry.

"Today's funerals don't support the grieving as well as they could, and I also found out through research that cremation and convention burials pollute and are wasteful in different ways," she said. "We need to create new spaces in our cities where we can do death better, and incorporating the technology of livestock composting made sense."

In the recomposition process, the deceased body would be lowered down into a tall composting bay with a small footprint, where it would be composted with a bulking agent like wood chips. Aeration would be provided by ports in the side of the structure.

"It's based on livestock composting principles, but we actually invented our own process," Spade said. "We took the aerated windrow concept and turned it on its side so that it is vertically designed. The reason it is vertical is because it is meant to be in the city and we need to minimize land use, so the obvious thing to do is to go up. The system we designed is vertically stacked, which I don't think has ever been done before because there really hasn't been a need for it. Most composting is done in rural spaces, where there is land."

Gradually, the body moves downward through the bay as it decomposed. The end product would be about a yard of compost, including the composted bulking materials.

"We think the process will take four to six weeks, but we really don't know until we build the prototype," she said.

"This is not like cremation where you give the ashes of the body to the family. This is a corrective system in the end. The bodies are put in and composted individually, but when we get to the second stage there will be a mixing and curing and finishing of the compost, because at that point we are no longer human. Families will be encouraged to take some of that compost, but it won't just be from a single body at that point."

Spade expects that about six bodies could be moving down through the bay at the same time, each of which would be in a different stage of decomposition. The bays would be modularly designed, so a site could have one or more bay.

Last winter, Spade and Lynne Carpenter-Boggs, a soil scientist at Washington State worked with Western Carolina University to determine the most efficient way of composting human bodies. Donated bodies were placed in beds of wood chips, To vary the conditions, alfalfa pellets and water were later added to one of the bodies.

Human composting, Spade said is not legal in any state in the U.S.

"Our legal team thinks that if we really want to we could probably do it now in Colorado," she said. "How we care for deceased bodies is a state by state decision. Most states are the same generally, with three options: bury, cremate or donate to science. In Washington we are working on a strategy to bring it to the legislature to offer another option for consumers."

The Urban Death Project, a non-profit organization is now seeking donations toward building a prototype. The current fundraising campaign seeks \$20,000 by the end of November. The overall cost of the prototype is expected to be around \$75,000, with a final project cost of around \$300,000.

"Once we make money we can start to involve Washington State (University)," she said. "Once we have a prototype, which will only take a couple months to build, we can run a pilot program. We have to have a successful pilot program before we can

take it to the legislature. Hopefully we can take this to the legislature within a year and a half to two years."

Spade said she took her idea to Carpenter-Boggs after learning of Washington State's work in composting livestock mortalities.

"We will start by insuring that the system works by using some human sized animals, then maybe we will find some human donors," she said. "We're already getting inquiries about this."

Ultimately, she said, the process would include on-site memorial services.

"By composting the body, the laws of nature are not violated and the cycles of life will be completed," Beck wrote.

Through the end of November, donations to the project can be made at <https://recomposition.causevox.com>.

Degradables

Mulch

From page 1

costly. The mulch is then taken to a landfill or burned, neither of which are desirable outcomes for the environment.

In response to these issues, attempts have been made to develop a 100 percent bio-based material that can be a substitute for polyethylene plastic. Today's commercially available biodegradable mulch products are only 98 percent bio-based, meaning two percent of the mulch substance contains petroleum-based polymers, UNL said.

"Certified organic farmers have not been allowed to use these bio-based alternatives because they contain two percent of a petroleum-based component," said Sam Wortman, who received the research grant. "Plastic mulch is effective, convenient and affordable but it creates an environmental nuisance and a large number of producers can't use it so there has to be an alternative."

(See Mulch, page 18)

Degradables

Mulch

From page 17

The organic industry is valued at \$43 billion in the U.S. and is growing by a few billion each year. Industry growth shows no signs of slowing which is why a bio-based mulch needs to be available for organic fruit and vegetable farmers, UNL said. For a mulch to be considered allowable on certified organic farms, the USDA requirement is that 90 percent of the mulch needs to be fully decomposed in the soil within 24 months.

Wortman will partner with 3M to evaluate that company's fabric alternative that is believed to be 100 percent biodegradable.

"We'll be evaluating how fast

mulches degrade when soil moisture, nutrients, and microbial activity are limited under field conditions," Wortman said. "The goal is to understand how these mulches degrade and if there's a way we can use compost, irrigation, cover crops or another method to stimulate the microbial communities in the soil so that they start to chomp down on the mulch and get it to disappear within 24 months."



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the Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD), the court overturned an earlier decision that halted shipments of soil to the Stebbings Road quarry on the grounds that it was operating as a landfill in violation of a district zoning bylaw.

The court of appeal found, however, that the quarry is a mine and that the province — not the regional district — has exclusive jurisdiction to regulate mining activities. The court said the mining activities include filling the quarry cavity with contaminated soil as a way to reclaim the site.

Some residents fear that contaminants stored in the quarry eventually will leach from the site and pollute the nearby lake and people's drinking water. — *Times Colonist*, www.timescolonist.com



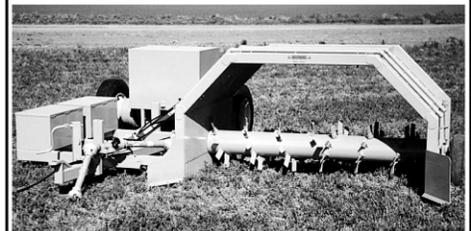
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