

The Biodegradable Products Institute (BPI) is North America's leading certifier of compostable materials, products, and packaging, with 350+ member companies worldwide. BPI supports a shift to the circular economy by promoting the production, use, and appropriate end of life management for materials and products that are designed to fully biodegrade in specific biologically active environments.

BPI is supportive of ordinances for certified compostable foodservice products when composting access is available or planned. These ordinances often include initiatives to promote reduction and reuse in the circular economy (e.g. charging a fee on single-use items, encouraging reusables for dine-in), but the principles below are exclusively focused on elements that will make a composting program the most successful. The elements are intended to fit into the specifics of a local ordinance, rather than being a full model ordinance.

Best practices for compostables in foodservice ordinances include the following criteria:

- 1** Businesses should have front-of-house food scraps collection bins (or planned access through a sister ordinance) if compostable products are required.
 - a. Residential access to food scraps composting should similarly be available or planned, whether through a curbside, drop-off program or similar.
 - b. Compostable products should be required to have third-party certification to compostability specifications (currently ASTM D6400 or D6868).
- 2** Products should be easily identifiable as [per industry labeling guidelines](#) and labeling requirements [follow basic principles](#).
- 3** All single-use foodservice items used in businesses with compost collection should be required to be certified compostable, rather than a mixture with non-compostable items, to avoid contamination in the composting stream.
 - a. Exemptions for readily recyclable items should be limited to those that are easily separated, such as beverage bottles and aluminum;
 - b. Exemptions should not be given to non-recyclable items, such as condiment packets or lids, which leads to contamination.
 - c. A single-bin approach (where everything goes into a composting bin) is a best practice where possible, noting that a small bin for incidental trash or limited recyclables (e.g. beverage bottles) may still be needed.

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Limiting options to just unlined compostable paper and fiber foodservice products should be avoided, as it has unintended consequences

- a. Several categories of takeout food packaging are not possible in the near future without compostable coatings and linings to create a barrier needed to protect against liquids, fats, greases and prevent wetting and subsequent breakage, such as a hot cup for coffee;
- b. Limiting options to uncoated paper/fiber is likely to lead to exemptions for non-compostable alternatives, creating confusion and contamination (including PFAS);
- c. Options for addressing local challenges with processing products with compostable polymers include the following pathways:
 - i. Funding: Renegotiation of contracts (e.g. hauling, processing, municipal, etc.) or elevated tipping fees with higher rates may be needed to help fund facility upgrades, expansion of capacity, or new capacity.
 - ii. Labeling: Contamination concerns can be addressed through foodservice ordinances, and requirements for labeling/identification (e.g. Washington RCW 70A.455);
 - iii. Organic compost: Separate processing of food waste and compostable products may be possible at the composting facility, so as to not interfere with manufacture of organic compost; Organic agriculture restrictions are also being addressed in California (AB 1201 requires compostables to be an accepted input by 2026), and nationally by the US Composting Council, Plant Based Products Council, BPI, and the California Compost Coalition; and
 - iv. Rate of breakdown: BPI is leading the development of a standardized field test at ASTM to establish a viable means for assessing real world break down.