



February 9, 2012

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is being submitted in support of the University of South Carolina's STARS documentation for an innovation credit. Last August, USC constructed a three section compost bin and began collecting food scraps for composting. These construction materials were purchased through an EPA grant that was awarded to "Develop a composting educational campaign and demonstration". We have successfully trained our dining staff and now are collecting food scraps and composting. We've already processed over 4000 lbs of food scraps as listed in our report on the second page.

The compost will be used in our sustainable community garden this spring. This garden will provide food for the students and staff in the Green quad and has already become an educational resource for students, staff, and faculty alike. Due to the increase of volume of food scraps, we are purchasing two vermicomposting bins. Purchasing and installing these bins to the system will allow for additional capacity for the system, which is greatly needed. The worms will produce finished compost more quickly than our current 3 bin system can do alone and will also provide a high quality soil amendment for the garden. We estimate to have these bins installed within the month.

I work with and mentor the students on the compost project and the new vermicomposting bins. As the Associate Vice President for Health and Safety it is important to reduce our impact to the environment and reuse/recycle materials where possible on the campus. I teach a sustainable projects class and we are focusing on composting and converting waste grease into biodiesel. The compostable byproduct from this process may be combined in the compost in the future. By composting/vermicomposting and using the product in the gardens, not only is USC educating the campus and the community, it is creating a path to a sustainable way of life. As such I believe that the USC composting and vermicomposting project qualifies for an innovation credit.

Sincerely,

Tom Syfert
Principal Investigator