



Letter of Support for Denver's Proposed Expanded Waste Services Policy

(Last updated 6/6/22)

Dear Denver City Council,

We, the organizations and individuals signed below, urge you to support the proposed Expanded Waste Services policy for Denver. The proposed policy will expand waste services for the 180,000 residences that have their waste collected by the City and County of Denver by:

- Providing weekly recycling collection;
- Providing weekly compost collection for those who want it at no additional cost;
- Creating a “volume-based pricing” or “pay-as-you-throw” model for trash collection;
- Creating an instant rebate program to help low-income households pay for trash collection services.

Over 9,000 communities across the country with similar systems experience waste diversion rates two to three times higher than Denver's low rate of 26%. Our waste diversion rate is much lower than similarly-sized cities that have a volume-based pricing program for trash collection.

Expanding access to weekly curbside compost collection is an urgent climate change solution. When landfilled, food scraps and yard waste contribute to methane emissions, a powerful greenhouse gas that is 84 times more potent than carbon dioxide in trapping heat in the atmosphere. By composting organic discards instead of landfilling them, we not only reduce greenhouse gas emissions from landfills, but we can also produce a local compost amendment that, when applied to soils, builds healthier and more drought-resistant soils that result in more nutrient-dense food and increased rates of carbon sequestration from the atmosphere. Our current system charges for curbside compost collection, presenting a barrier to residents who want to divert their organic waste from the landfill.

The proposed Expanded Waste System also increases recycling collections from biweekly to weekly. With more online ordering than ever before, residents' recycling carts are filling up with cardboard boxes and other valuable recyclable materials faster than their trash carts. With the current biweekly collections, recycling bins can fill up before collection day, and valuable recyclable materials end up in trash bins rather than recycling bins, going to landfills rather than being recirculated through our local economy.

We know providing these new, expanded services comes at an additional cost. Therefore, we fully support changing our system to be more equitable by charging residents for the amount of trash they send to the landfill. If trash is treated as a utility, similar to water and energy, the funds generated from trash collection will support expanded recycling and compost collections. Residents, businesses, and multi-family buildings would no longer be subsidizing sending single-family home waste to the landfill

through the general fund. Instead, residents would only pay for what they use. We also strongly support assisting low-income residents through a first-in-the-nation instant rebate program. The instant rebate program will reduce the cost of trash collection based on household size and income. By approving this policy, Denver can become a model for other communities to adopt an equitable instant rebate program for waste services.

The proposed Expanded Waste Services model has proven to be an effective way to minimize the amount of trash sent to landfills in thousands of communities across the nation. It is an opportunity for the city to increase its landfill diversion rate, create more green jobs, and employ a proven climate solution while ensuring all Denver residents have access to more efficient waste services. Please support the City and County of Denver's proposed Expanded Waste Services policy.

Signed,

350 Colorado
Michah Parkin
Founder & Executive Director

The Alliance Center
Brenna Simmons
Executive Director

**Climate Reality
Denver Metro Chapter**
Tracey MacDermott
Chair

**Colorado Public Interest
Research Group**
Danny Katz
Executive Director

Conservation Colorado
Kelly Nordini
Executive Director

Compost Colorado
Vann Fussell
Founder and Chief

Denver Streets Partnership
Jill Locantore
Executive Director

Eco-Cycle
Suzanne Jones
Executive Director

Ecoinclusive
C. Parker McMullen Bushman
Creator

Green Up Our Schools
Anthony Hodes
Executive Director

Lowry United Neighborhood
Renee Arrington

Ridwell
Rebecca Hayes
Denver General Manager

Sierra Club-Denver Metro
Thomas Riggle
Legislative Committee Chair

We Don't Waste

Women in Sustainability
Becky Migas
Founder & Chief CARE
Connector