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MAYOR EMANUEL PROPOSES RECOVERY OF BIOGAS FOR USE BY COMPOSTING FACILITIES

Byproduct of Composting Operation will Convert Waste to Energy

As part of his ongoing efforts to improve the environment through reducing waste and encouraging sustainable practices, Mayor Rahm Emanuel proposed an amendment to the Chicago Municipal Code on Wednesday. Currently, the Municipal Code allows properly permitted facilities to engage in operations that convert waste to energy. However, because of a prohibition on using recyclable materials as fuel, composting facilities could not recover and use the biogas that is a byproduct of the composting operation converting waste to energy.

“Converting waste into energy will help Chicago become a greener, more sustainable City,” said Mayor Rahm Emanuel. “Relying on clean, renewable resources further secures Chicago’s global competitiveness as we invest in our future and make energy usage more efficient.”

The amendment will clarify language in the Recycling Facility Permitting Ordinance regarding the recovery of materials for fuel in energy production processes. Because of the current prohibition on using recyclable materials as fuel, a composting facility may not recover and use the biogas which is a byproduct of the composting operation. With new technologies, gases from the decomposition of organic waste (including food waste, yard clippings and non-recyclable paper) can be captured and use as clean, renewable energy, rather than released to the atmosphere. This ordinance will help divert organic waste from landfills, particularly food waste, which accounts for about 14% of the municipal solid waste stream.

This amendment furthers the Sustainable Chicago 2015 goal to promote waste reduction, reuse, and recycling.

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