

# New Environmentally Responsible Yard Waste Collection Requirements

Annapolis (July 12, 2016) – Anne Arundel County will this week begin a six-month outreach effort to inform residents about new curbside yard waste collection requirements.

Beginning January 1, 2017, the Department of Public Works will no longer accept plastic bags as a container for grass clippings, leaves, Christmas Trees, and other yard waste materials set out for curbside collection.

After the new requirements are implemented, residents will still have three choices when setting out yard waste for collection:

- Bag it using compostable lawn and leaf paper bags, available at most home or hardware stores.
- Bin it in your own reusable containers marked with an “X”.
- Bundle it in collectable bundles.

The practice of accepting yard waste in plastic bags has nearly eliminated the County’s recycling options. Refining the County’s program is necessary to address the litter problems and increased processing costs that result from the use of plastic bags. The new requirements follow composting industry trends and will immediately increase the County’s available recycling outlets.

“Making this change not only reduces waste, it is the fiscally responsible way to manage County government,” said County Executive Steve Schuh. “Expanding our yard waste processing options will decrease our operating expenses back to sustainable levels and ensure our ability to continue recycling this material as the law requires.”

For years, private companies within Anne Arundel County and the Prince George’s County Yard Waste Composting Facility in nearby Upper Marlboro ensured that the County could recycle its leaves, grass, and brush. The County has incurred significant increases to its yard waste processing costs over the last three years during which time all but one area composting facility have prohibited plastic bags or gone out of business.

Since 2015, the Department of Public Works has recycled yard waste by shipping materials collected in plastic bags 40 miles away to its lone remaining option in Carroll County. The private company in Woodbine, Maryland charges a \$12 per ton premium to handle yard waste delivered in plastic bags. Annually, the County collects approximately 30,000 tons of yard waste as part of its curbside collection program.

The Recycling and Waste Reduction Division of DPW’s Bureau of Waste Management Services will utilize several different outreach methods to ensure residents are effectively

informed in advance of the new requirements. All customers will receive two postcards over the next six months; an announcement and a reminder of requirements. Notices will be provided to customers who use plastic bags this Fall as a reminder of the new requirements to begin January 2017. Other outreach methods will include the posting of useful information on the County's website and through social media outlets, providing presentations for Homeowner's Association Meetings, and producing flyers suitable for use in neighborhood newsletters and distribution in the community.