

DNR Recommendations on “Compostable” Yard Waste Plastic Bags

PUB-WA-423 2005



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Purpose and Background

Wisconsin law [s. 287.08, Wis. Stats.] prohibits putting bagged yard waste in a solid waste treatment or storage facility “unless the bag is constructed of a material that decomposes within a reasonable time after exposure to weather elements and is labeled as being so constructed”. We are aware that a number of plastic bags are available commercially that are labeled as biodegradable or compostable. This guidance assists local governments in determining which bags may meet the requirements of this law.

One way of meeting this requirement is for local governments to require use of bags that meet the ASTM D6400 Standard Specification for Compostable Plastics or D6868 Standard Specification for Biodegradable Plastics Used as Coatings on Paper and Other Compostable Substrates, as appropriate. The first two sections of these specifications are available for free at www.astm.org by clicking the Standards Search link and entering D6400 or D6868 in the Enter Designation or Keyword box and clicking the Search button. The specifications are intended to establish the requirements for labeling of products as “compostable in municipal and industrial composting facilities.”

Recommendations

Local governments should also consider requiring the use of bags that have been certified by an independent organization as meeting ASTM D6400 or D6868, as appropriate. This is because: 1) meeting either specification involves demonstrating multiple characteristics and not all bags meet all of the required characteristics; and, 2) independent organization certifications better ensure that bags actually and completely meet a specification.

The Department of Natural Resources recommends requiring use of bags that have been certified as meeting ASTM D6400 or D6868, as appropriate, by either of the following organizations:

- a. The Biodegradable Products Institute (www.bpiworld.org) awards the use of the “Compostable Logo” to any products meeting ASTM D6400 or D6868, based on testing in approved independent laboratories. BPI has a list of approved compostable bags on its website.
- b. DIN CERTCO operates a certification scheme for compostable products made of biodegradable materials and licenses the use of the corresponding Mark developed by the Interest Group for Biodegradable Materials (IBAW). With the new version of their certification scheme a certification can be conducted according to ASTM D6400. More information about DIN CERTCO is available at www.dincertco.de/en/index.html.

Contact DNRWasteMaterials@wisconsin.gov if you have questions.

Disclaimer: This document is intended solely as guidance and does not contain any mandatory requirements except where requirements found in statute or administrative rule are referenced. Any regulatory decisions made by the Department of Natural Resources in any matter addressed by this guidance will be made by applying the governing statutes and administrative rules to the relevant facts.

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WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES NOTICE OF FINAL GUIDANCE & CERTIFICATION

Pursuant to ch. 227, Wis. Stats., the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources has finalized and hereby certifies the following guidance document.

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WA-19-0423-C

DOCUMENT TITLE

DNR Recommendations on "Compostable" Yard Waste Plastic Bags

PROGRAM/BUREAU

Waste and Materials Management

STATUTORY AUTHORITY OR LEGAL CITATION

Chs. 289 and 287, Wis. Stats.

DATE SENT TO LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE BUREAU (FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS)

October 21, 2019

DATE FINALIZED

November 12, 2019

DNR CERTIFICATION

I have reviewed this guidance document or proposed guidance document and I certify that it complies with sections 227.10 and 227.11 of the Wisconsin Statutes. I further certify that the guidance document or proposed guidance document contains no standard, requirement, or threshold that is not explicitly required or explicitly permitted by a statute or a rule that has been lawfully promulgated. I further certify that the guidance document or proposed guidance document contains no standard, requirement, or threshold that is more restrictive than a standard, requirement, or threshold contained in the Wisconsin Statutes.

November 12, 2019

Signature

Date