

# **Increasing Compost Use By Caltrans Project**

The California Integrated Waste Management Board (CIWMB) is focused on the sustainable and cost-effective use of millions of tons of organic materials. Organic materials comprise 30 percent of what is still disposed in landfills, and these materials are a major target of the CIWMB's Green Procurement Action Plan (GPAP). The GPAP is designed to stimulate the markets for priority materials that are diverted from landfilling.

In order to stimulate the market for organic materials, the CIWMB is currently sponsoring a project to increase Caltrans use of compost and mulch. Participants include Caltrans, University of California Riverside Extension, Association of Compost Producers (ACP), United States Composting Council (USCC), erosion control professionals, and Soil Control Laboratories.

Caltrans uses compost statewide in design and maintenance projects, primarily in hydroseeding for erosion control. In a recent document titled "Compost Use on State Highway Applications," the Composting Council Research and Education Foundation (CCREF) and United States Composting Council (USCC) estimated that Caltrans has a potential market for compost of at least 3,350,000 cubic yards and as much as 6,725,000 cubic yards.

These figures are based on annual applications of one to two inches of material on all landscaped acreage (that is, land that Caltrans has prepared design plans for), but do not include additional acreage under Caltrans authority. The difference between compost used by Caltrans and the estimated potential market implies that Caltrans could use a minimum of an additional 3 million cubic yards of compost on an annual basis.

Caltrans has identified several compost use categories and has committed to developing compost or mulch use specifications for these

different types of applications. Compost use categories include amendment/topper/soil prep/backfill, hydroseed, compost blankets, compost berms, biofiltration strips, biofiltration swales, mulch, and drill seeding.

Staff anticipates that Caltrans will complete adoption of the new specifications by fall 2006. In addition, many local departments of public works (DPW) have indicated that they often utilize Caltrans specifications. It is anticipated that they will adopt Caltrans compost and mulch specifications, resulting in even more increased local diversion of organics.

## **Upcoming Caltrans Workshops**

As a result of the Caltrans compost use project, new specifications have been developed that focus on improving roadside revegetation for erosion control and stormwater quality through compost-based best management practices (BMP).

A series of five workshops has been scheduled across the state to introduce these new specifications to district designers, including landscape architects, biologists, and stormwater quality coordinators.

In addition to rolling out a number of innovative methods of improving water quality, these workshops will provide designers with the opportunity to comment, suggest revisions, and ask compost/water quality-related questions of a diverse team of experts.

The workshop team will be staffed by University professionals, researchers, soil scientists, and California compost industry professionals as well as landscape architects with extensive compost experience from other state transportation departments.

These workshops will provide practical tools and information on improving stormwater quality through the use of compost-based BMPs.

Workshops are scheduled for:

**Los Angeles**

**August 22, 2006**

**San Diego**

**August 24, 2006**

**Oakland**

**September 26, 2006**

**Fresno**

**September 28, 2006**

**Sacramento**

**October 11, 2006**

**Additional Information**

Look for additional information on the workshops at [www.ciwmb.ca.gov/Organics/](http://www.ciwmb.ca.gov/Organics/).

Also, check the above link in fall 2006 for the new/revised Caltrans compost specifications and the compost applications best practices manual.