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December 18, 2019

Hon. Roger Millar  
Secretary of Transportation  
P.O. Box 47300  
Olympia, WA 98504-7300

Dear Secretary Millar:

On behalf of Washington state's dairy farmers we ask that you adjust the current specifications so that dairy compost can be used for state highway projects.

Dairy compost is a valuable commodity used by many non-dairy farms. It is particularly important for our state's growing organic farming community. Increasing the markets for and value of dairy compost also helps our dairy farmers to continue their progress in improving efficiency and environmental protections.

Recently, the state's major provider of organic dairy compost, Organix, was asked to bid on providing nearly 150,000 yards of compost for a Highway 12 project. That project alone would have consumed the compost production from one 5000 cow dairy for one year. Unfortunately, while the Department document detailing compost requirements allows for dairy compost, the specifications appear designed to disallow its use. We suspect that those promoting non-dairy compost have influenced these specifications to reduce competition as there is no known science-based rationale for these specifications. We find it ironic that the dairy compost critically important to growing organic food in our state is not allowed to be used for highway beautification projects.

Taxpayers of our state benefit from greater competition among compost suppliers. Our farmers benefit from having access to the Department's projects. We urge your review and reconsideration of the current compost specifications.

Sincerely,

Gerald Baron  
Executive Director  
Save Family Farming