

**WASTEWATER  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
TO THE MASSACHUSETTS WATER  
RESOURCES AUTHORITY**

Charlestown Patriot-Bridge  
385 Broadway, Suite 105 in the Citizens Bank Building,  
Revere, MA 02151

To the Editor:

Your Oct. 6, 2014 article “Local Facility to Start Turning Food Waste into Fuel” contained a number of errors that the Wastewater Advisory Committee wishes to correct.

1. Waste Management’s site in Charlestown will not be turning food waste into fuel. Instead, it is a waystation for food waste that could eventually be barged to Deer Island to be digested along with sludge to create methane gas, a natural fuel.
2. The food waste would not be composted, it would be digested using the anaerobic bacteria in the digesters. Large-scale composting operations are already on-line in other areas of the state, but are usually not suitable for urban settings.
3. The MWRA will be producing the fuel for its Deer Island operation, increasing the availability of renewable, on-site, green energy from its current rate of 25% (representing more than \$5million in savings annually for rate payers). The Charlestown site will not be producing gas.
4. The MWRA Board has not yet approved a pilot program for Deer Island waste food –to-fuel production. Grants and loans from the state will be required to start such a program up. The timeline is not fixed yet.
5. The Charlestown site was part of the proposed pilot that was put on hold when trucking through Winthrop was ruled out. It could be the site of processing and transportation via barge to Deer Island, if the pilot is approved.
6. The original pilot proposal would not have reached 9 truckloads a day (18 trips if each round trip were counted as two) until late in the first year of the pilot; it would have started with one truck and gradually increased as the capacity of the pre-processing at Waste Management’s Charlestown facility increased and Deer Island’s digesters had the capacity to receive the material.
7. The original pilot anticipated truck delivery of food waste five days a week, not seven.

The Wastewater Advisory Committee, a volunteer citizens group extant since 1990, has been closely following the MWRA’s work on the proposed co-digestion pilot. If successful, the program could beneficially use organic waste and save MWRA rate payers funds now used to power the Deer Island facility with fossil fuels. We are pleased that the MWRA is exploring this option carefully to maximize benefits for the state and the ratepayers.

We appreciate your interest in the subject. We hope that the corrections we provided are useful in future coverage, and that you will share them with your readers.

Sincerely,

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