

REPORT TO SALT SPRING ISLAND LOCAL COMMUNITY COMMISSION MEETING OF THURSDAY, AUGUST 20, 2026

SUBJECT **Sustainable Waste Management on Salt Spring Island**

ISSUE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide the Salt Spring Island Local Community Commission with additional information regarding sustainable waste management initiatives in local schools.

BACKGROUND

On June 11, 2026, the Salt Spring Island (SS) Local Community Commission (LCC) received a presentation from the Gulf Island Secondary School (GISS) Earth Club regarding sustainable waste management initiatives on SSI. The presentation was referred back to staff for additional information regarding the requests presented to the Commission.

The GISS Earth Club presentation highlighted waste diversion and recycling initiatives undertaken at GISS, including the installation of recycling stations, waste audits, and student education programs. The presentation noted that approximately 75% of audited waste streams were compostable, while a significant portion of the remainder consisted of recyclable materials.

The presentation identified three primary requests:

1. Funding support for recycling initiatives.
2. Development of a local Industrial, Commercial and Institutional recycling service or facility.
3. Expanded opportunities for composting organic waste on SSI.

The presentation also noted broader community support for waste diversion initiatives and identified opportunities for collaboration between local agencies and organizations.

The Capital Regional District's (CRD) role in solid waste management is guided by the Regional Solid Waste Management Plan. The CRD supports waste reduction, recycling, education, and diversion initiatives across the region. However, collection and processing services for many commercial and institutional waste streams are typically provided by private operators rather than directly by the CRD.

The CRD's Environmental Services committee has provided a report to the CRD Board on how the CRD's Solid Waste Management Plan can be leveraged to support school districts in implementing and maintaining effective recycling programs (Appendix A). The report outlines opportunities to support school districts in improving recycling and waste diversion through existing and proposed initiatives under the Solid Waste Management Plan (SWMP). Following engagement with regional school districts, staff identified key challenges including high collection and infrastructure costs, limited staff capacity, contamination issues, pest management concerns, and difficulties accessing recycling services in remote communities such as the Southern Gulf Islands.

To address these barriers, the report recommends providing schools with targeted supports such as pack-in/pack-out programs, waste audits, funding for recycling infrastructure and diversion initiatives, educational resources, composting support, and grant opportunities. The proposed actions align with existing SWMP objectives and can be delivered within current budgets. The recommendations in the report were approved by the CRD Board extending these supports to all school districts in the Capital Region to help increase recycling, reduce waste sent to Hartland Landfill, and advance regional waste reduction goals.

In addition, the CRD is proposing amendments to Composting Facilities Regulation Bylaw No. 2736 to exempt the Salt Spring Abattoir Society from CRD licensing requirements. Following provincial updates to the Organic Matter Recycling Regulation (OMRR) in 2022, key operational requirements related to odour management, pest control, and environmental protection are now regulated by the province. As a result, Amendment Bylaw No. 4765 would remove redundant CRD licensing requirements and fees, allowing the Salt Spring Abattoir Society's composting facility to accept local organic materials in accordance with provincial regulations.

IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

While the LCC has not been delegated a service or budget specifically related to school recycling programs, it may consider supporting local initiatives through its existing Grant-in-Aid program, subject to available funding and program criteria.

Additional funding opportunities may be available through CRD waste diversion and community support programs. The CRD Board has approved funding to support school-based waste reduction initiatives, including waste audits, recycling infrastructure, educational resources, composting projects, and pilot diversion programs, with up to \$100,000 available regionally in 2026. Any future proposals from School District No. 64 or local schools seeking support for waste diversion initiatives could be considered through these existing CRD programs or other external funding sources.

CONCLUSION

The Gulf Island Senior Secondary Earth Club has highlighted opportunities to improve waste diversion and sustainability in schools on Salt Spring Island. Recent CRD initiatives provide funding and program supports for school-based recycling, composting, education, and waste reduction projects and are proposing amendments to the Composting Facilities Regulation Bylaw to allow Salt Spring Island's composting facility to accept organic waste. While the LCC does not have a direct mandate for school waste management services, it may consider supporting eligible initiatives through existing grant programs and encourage partnerships that advance local and regional waste diversion objectives

RECOMMENDATION

There is no recommendation, this report is for information only.

Concurrence:	Dan Ovington, BBA, Senior Manager, Salt Spring Island Administration
Concurrence:	Stephen Henderson, MBA, P.G.Dip.Eng, BSc, General Manager, Electoral Area Services

ATTACHMENT(S)

Appendix A: Environmental Services Committee Staff Report, Dated May 20, 2026