

# What the Law Says

## 1. 2026 Food Waste Reduction Law

Every county solid waste management district must develop a plan to cut food waste by 50% by 2035, measured against 2022 levels. NJDEP is directed to create tiered permit regulations to support compliance.

## 2. Food Waste Recycling and Waste-to-Energy Law (P.L. 2020 c.24)

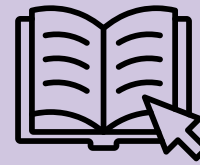
Requires large food waste generators—those producing 52+ tons annually - to separate and recycle food waste, provided they are within 25 road miles of an authorized recycling facility.

## 3. Bill S606/A2031 — Food Date Labeling (pending)

Misreading date labels like "sell by" and "best by" drives an estimated 20% of household food waste — people throw away food that is still perfectly safe. This bill would standardize labels into two clear categories: "BEST if Used By" (quality) and "USE By" (safety), and explicitly protect the donation of food past its quality date.



## Resources



- **NJ DEP Food Waste Toolkit**  
<https://dep.nj.gov/sustainability/outreach-and-education/food-waste-toolkit/>
- **EPA Sustainable Management of Food Basics** <https://tinyurl.com/ynrct9rk>
- **Food Waste "The Big Picture"**  
<https://refed.org/food-waste/the-problem>
- **How to Compost: A Guide to Composting at Home** <https://tinyurl.com/3crwtw2z>
- **Somerset County Food Resources Mapping Tool**  
<https://www.somersetcountynj.gov/Home/Components/News/News/6921/17>



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# Reduce Food Waste



# Smart Giving

**1 in 9 NJ residents** experience food insecurity — including **1 in 7 children** — yet **29%** of the U.S. food supply goes uneaten every year, that is nearly **114 billion meals'** worth of food.

Donating surplus food to pantries, shelters, and community organizations before it becomes waste is the single highest-impact action individuals and businesses can take. The EPA's Food Recovery Hierarchy puts feeding people first — above composting and energy recovery — because redirecting food to people in need addresses hunger and reduces harmful methane emissions from landfills at the same time.

**349 lbs** of food waste per year — that's what the average American generates. The national reduction goal cuts that to 164 lbs. Smart giving gets us there.

How to get started:

- Contact your local food pantry to learn what donations they accept
- Ask your grocery store, restaurant, or workplace if they have a food donation program — if not, help them start one



**Check out ANJEC's  
Food Waste Webinar  
-scan the QR code!**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kF6aCnNWDuo>

## Food Waste Reduction Guidelines

- **Smart Shopping:** Plan meals and food shopping trips and buy only what you need.
- **Smart Storage:** Store food for maximum freshness and organize items in the refrigerator and freezer by oldest to newest.
- **Smart Serving:** Watch portion sizes and avoid overserving by offering only the right amount of food and drink to be eaten during each meal.
- **Smart Leftovers:** Keep tabs on leftovers and older ingredients and eat them before they spoil. You may even develop a new favorite dish in the process.



Photo Credit: Millburn HS



## Featured Work

The Millburn Environmental Commission partnered with Millburn High School's Environmental Club and Life Skills class on a six-week food waste recycling pilot project. Student volunteers diverted 535 pounds of food waste, which was collected weekly and composted at an industrial facility. Students called the experience "active and hands-on" — highlighting that local environmental commissions can engage the next generation while making a measurable difference in their community.

## A Basic Guide to Composting

Composting allows organic material such as food scraps (typically thrown away) to decompose into a nutrient-rich, soil-like material that can help plants grow.

Items that you can compost:

- |                    |                   |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| • Fallen leaves    | • Dry goods       |
| • Grass clippings  | (crackers, flour) |
| • Plant debris     | • Pasta           |
| • Vegetable scraps | • Fruit scraps    |
| • Coffee grounds   | • Shredded        |
| and loose tea      | paper/newspaper   |
| • Eggshells and    | • Cardboard (non- |
| nutshells          | glossy)           |

When composting, you can either make a pile in your yard or utilize a bin. Compost machines are another option. To create a productive compost pile, you need water, air, carbon-rich materials (leaves, wood chippings, straw, or cardboard), and nitrogen-rich materials (weeds, kitchen scraps, or grass clippings).

Composting reduces the volume of food waste. "Composting food scraps results in about a **50 percent** reduction of the original material" (ca.gov).

