



**To:** General Purposes Committee

**Date:** June 17, 2016

**From:** John Irving, P.Eng. MPA  
Director, Engineering

**File:** 10-6175-02-01/2016-  
Vol 01

**Re:** **Odour Management from Organic Recycling Facilities Update**

**Staff Recommendation**

That a letter be sent to the Metro Vancouver Board of Directors expressing Council's concerns with how long the Harvest Power air quality permit renewal process has taken, and requesting that negotiations for durable solutions for odour management be expedited in order to meet the firm September 30, 2016 permit deadline.

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<b>REPORT CONCURRENCE</b>	
<b>CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER</b> 	
<b>REVIEWED BY STAFF REPORT / AGENDA REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE</b>	<b>INITIALS:</b>  DW
<b>APPROVED BY CAO</b> 	

## Staff Report

### Origin

The purpose of this report is to provide updates regarding recent provincial regulatory changes affecting organic waste facilities in British Columbia and the status of Harvest Power's air quality permit application.

This report supports Council's 2014-2018 Term Goal #1 A Safe Community:

*Maintain emphasis on community safety to ensure Richmond continues to be a safe community.*

*1.1. Policy and service models that reflect Richmond-specific needs.*

### Background

At the November 9, 2015 Council meeting, Council received information regarding odour management from organic facilities in and around Richmond. At the meeting, Council resolved to send letters to Metro Vancouver and the Provincial Ministry of Environment asking them to more stringently and comprehensively address odours from facilities managing organic waste. The report noted that Harvest Power was the only such facility operating under an air quality permit. The report also noted that local governments are exempt from air quality permits but operate under Operational Certificates issued by the province. Operational Certificates require odour management plans but not enforceable requirements as is the case for permits. The report stated that these inconsistencies present challenges for how regulators respond to public concerns regarding odours and how operators and regulators implement appropriate corrective measures. Without regulatory requirements and consistency in permitting, there is a disincentive for operators to take proactive measures to address odour issues when they arise.

Specific to the Province, the letter sent to Minister Polak stated that the City of Richmond believes that the region should seek to develop a level playing field for operators and communities as organics recycling becomes a critical aspect of regional waste diversion from landfills. Minister Polak was asked to assist in meeting this goal, by working with waste management facilities regulated by the province to include air quality and odour management measures as part of Operational Certificates.

On December 14, 2015, Council endorsed the staff recommendation to forward comments and concerns to Metro Vancouver as it pertained to Harvest Power's air quality permit renewal. The report identified a number of measures that could reduce odours from their operations, and was subsequently forwarded to Metro Vancouver.

### Analysis

#### Changes to the Organic Matter Recycling Regulation

On June 9, 2016, the Province announced regulatory changes to the Organic Matter Recycling Regulation (OMRR) requiring that discharges to the environment from facilities managing over 5,000 tonnes per year of food waste or biosolids be subject to a permit. The main focus of the new

permit requirements is to regulate air quality (including odours) and leachates. The rationale provided for the amendments related to reducing environmental impacts; addressing and reducing impacts from odour; addressing concerns regarding public notifications; increasing transparency; and allowing decision makers to put conditions in place to better monitor compliance and emphasize site-specific requirements.

Richmond has not been the only community heavily impacted by odours from organics recycling facilities. Residents in Lytton have also been dealing with issues related to odours from an organic waste management facility located in Botanie Valley. The waste managed at this facility originates in Metro Vancouver and Fraser Valley households and businesses. While Harvest Power is already subject to permit requirements, the Botanie Valley facility was not; the OMRR amendment will now require this facility to comply with air quality requirements.

#### Harvest Power Air Quality Permit Update

Harvest Power is currently engaged in a process with Metro Vancouver to renew their air quality permit. As part of this overall process, Metro Vancouver indicated they have received over 200 comments from citizens and stakeholders. Recent activities included an Open House that was held on March 3, 2016; approximately 75 people were in attendance. At the meeting, Harvest Power committed to several immediate first steps to address community concerns such as:

- Hiring an expert team to advise regularly on improved odour management practices and to identify long-term equipment upgrades.
- Revising standard operating procedures.
- Replacing biofilter media and overhauled the air pipe system underlying the piles.
- Discontinuing accepting certain kinds of more odour-causing food waste until a permanent solution has been found.

Harvest Power also recently boosted their community relations capacity by

- Establishing a direct odour complaint hotline to Harvest Power
- Exploring the establishment of a “Citizen Liaison Committee”
- Creating a website at: [www.richmondairpermit.ca](http://www.richmondairpermit.ca)

Metro Vancouver noted they received 123 complaints between January and April and have noted an increase in recent months. City staff have received two complaints in the same period. Metro Vancouver staff also indicated that the severity of the reported odours has also increased.

Metro Vancouver and Harvest Power remain in the permit review and negotiation stages of the air quality permit renewal process. No new or additional odour management requirements have been set at this stage but Metro Vancouver has indicated that they have set clear expectations that they are seeking clarity for how Harvest Power will reduce odours, improve collection and treatment, and improve dispersion of emissions in order to meet current permit requirements.

Harvest Power is currently operating under an Approval, which is similar to a permit but can be in place for a maximum of 15 months total and is approved administratively by Metro Vancouver on 3 or 6 month increments. Harvest Power’s current Approval expires on June 30, 2016 and cannot be extended beyond September 30, 2016 (represents the end of the 15 month

maximum Approval period). Since Harvest Power and Metro Vancouver have not concluded their negotiation for conditions in the renewed air quality permit, an extension to the Approval is required and as such, Harvest Power has applied for an extension to September 30<sup>th</sup>. Given that Metro Vancouver is considering extending Harvest Power's Approval, and that the process does not currently appear to be coming to a conclusion as quickly as the City would like, this is an opportune time to reiterate Council concerns to Metro Vancouver.

A similar facility is currently under construction in Surrey. The commitment made regarding odour management from organics recycling will set a new standard regionally. Many measures not currently in place at Harvest Power includes a fully enclosed facility, a series of scrubbers and bioscrubbers and a 70m stack, potentially filtered, to support optimal natural dispersion.

In this context, staff recommend that a letter be sent to the Metro Vancouver Board of Directors expressing Council's concerns with how long this process has taken, Council's expectation that the permit requirements require durable solutions for odour management such as requiring a filtered stack to disperse air emissions and that operations be covered as much as possible. The letter will request expedited negotiations with Harvest Power given the September 30, 2016 firm Approval deadline.

#### **Financial Impact**

None at this time.

#### **Conclusion**

Recent changes to the Organic Matter Recycling Regulation, as requested by the City, create a level playing field for operators managing over 5,000 tonnes per year of food waste. Locally, Harvest Power is nearing completion of the renewal of their air quality permit. It is recommended to send a letter to Metro Vancouver's Board of Directors communicating the City's concerns and expectations for the new air quality permit.



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