

LAURA HARRIS

Comments to Ecology, June 26, 2021

I am writing to express my disapproval of further permitting for agricultural use of biosolids as they exist now. The mixing of human waste with toxic waste produces an unknowable mixture, each one different, with no way to trace what is going where. Food is being grown in toxic waste and that is abhorrent and evil and wrong. People who work around this toxic sludge are at extreme risk of being contaminated, as are the people who eat the food grown in it.

I am not against the reuse of human waste. I in fact completely advocate for it in all levels of society. It needs to be done much differently than the current system though. Human feces and urine can be made into excellent fertilizer that our depleted soils desperately need. The lack of human waste compost is the missing link in our food chain. But we need to stop mixing our waste with our water and with other waste. Our waste needs to be isolated and mixed with carbon (like chipped wood and biochar) then composted onsite using aerobic composting or captured in movable containers and taken to neighborhood composting sites. These sites would process the waste into compost that could go back to farms, provide jobs, and sequester carbon helping to combat climate change. The existing infrastructure for moving the waste could still be used, but the product would be clean and be a healthy part of the soil it goes into, instead of a toxic byproduct that needs to be gotten rid of somehow.

This will sound like a radical restructuring of our lives, but we have gone through radical changes in order to get through the Covid pandemic, so proving that we are able to adapt. We need to be able to adapt. We need to take radical action to reverse climate change. We need to stop shitting in our water, and rebuild our towns and cities with localized composting facilities. The availability of large amounts of good compost would promote local farming and local food systems, reducing the need for excessive transportation and refrigeration.

The current distributing of toxic sludge as fertilizer by the Department of "Ecology" is a sign of the total corruption of the word Ecology. With a government agency so sold out to corporate interests that you deceive farmers into using waste that is sure to be their ruin, I doubt that my ideas will be taken seriously. But I am serious, and having practiced human waste composting for the last 25 years, I am living proof that it can be done.

For now, I say no more use of biosolids in agriculture.

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