

Organics Surcharge on Refuse Hauler Billings

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The City of Long Lake has three licensed residential refuse haulers for residents to choose from -- (in alphabetical order) Curbside Waste, Republic Services, and Waste Management. As you begin receiving billings for January 2024 service, you may notice your bill includes a new surcharge for organics collection.

How did this happen?

Hennepin County requires that curbside recycling service be available to households. Additionally, as of January 2022, Hennepin County required cities to make organics recycling available to all households with curbside recycling service. This requirement was part of revisions the County made to its recycling ordinance (Ordinance 13) in November 2018. Hennepin County's position is that significantly increasing the collection of organic material is important to achieving zero waste and climate action goals. The County is committed to achieving a zero-waste future, which the County defines as diverting 90% of waste from landfills or incinerators.

The County's ordinance required that cities either contract with a hauler to provide residential curbside organics collection with all households to be charged, regardless of participation; or allowed for cities to require that all licensed residential refuse haulers make organics collection services available to their customers. To comply with this mandate, Long Lake requires licensed

residential refuse haulers to make organics recycling available to their Long Lake customers.

Why do I need to pay for this if I don't plan on participating?

Minnesota has a state statute (Minn. Stat. §115A.93, subd. 3c) requiring that residents who participate in an organics recycling program are not charged more than those who do not participate. Cities are required by Hennepin County to make organics collection available to residents, and state law requires that all residents must be charged for organics recycling service in communities where the service is available. The intent is that making organics recycling service available and paid for by everyone makes the service more affordable for residents overall - and keeping prices affordable encourages residents to participate in an organics collection program.

Can I opt-out?

Households are not required to participate in the organics program, but unfortunately, households are not able to opt out of paying for the program. Similar to recycling, by state law, all residents help cover the cost of the organics recycling program to make it accessible to all households.

Your hauler may have already provided you with information regarding this change; however, if they haven't yet done so, we hope this explains the new charge you can expect to see on your monthly refuse hauler billings. This is the result of state law and Hennepin County organics recycling requirements, and compliance is required by cities.