

STATE OF NEW YORK
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STATE TO REDUCE EMPIRE STATE PLAZA'S SOLID WASTE STREAM BY DIVERTING CAFETERIA WASTE FOR COMPOSTING

New York State Office of General Services Commissioner John C. Egan today announced that cafeteria waste – including food and biodegradable cups, plates, utensils, and trays – generated by Empire State Plaza visitors, state employees, and food service workers, will now be turned into compost as part of Governor Paterson's ongoing commitment to sustainable state operations.

"We have an obligation in government to lead by example and that is precisely what we are doing today with this composting announcement. Food waste composting is an essential and sustainable solid waste management strategy," said Governor David A. Paterson. "Composting is easy to do at home and if you work at the Empire State Plaza, now it's easy to do at work. I applaud OGS Commissioner John Egan and his staff for blazing the trail in making the operation of our state government as sustainable as possible."

Commissioner Egan said: "Last year, Governor Paterson asked OGS to help New York State go green. Since then, we have put policy into practice and have removed millions of pieces of polystyrene that previously choked landfills from our cafeterias' waste stream. As we approach Earth Day 2009, we take another step forward by adding the benefits of composting to our ongoing efforts to source-separate our solid waste."

The project, being conducted jointly by OGS and Sodexo, the state's contract food vendor, will capture and divert for composting the kitchen food scraps such as vegetable peelings, fruit cores and stale bread, along with dining room waste such as uneaten food, paper napkins, and other biodegradable items. The process will significantly reduce the amount of trash hauled to a landfill. Sodexo's kitchens began collection on April 1, and its dining room application will begin on April 20 to coincide with a variety of Earth Week activities.

During the project's six-month first phase, the Pastabilities cafeteria, located on the Empire State Plaza's Concourse between Agency Buildings 1 and 2, will serve as the pilot site for the dining area part of the program. Patrons will be guided through simple

self-sorting procedures, dividing their waste into three categories: compostable, recyclable (i.e., glass, metal and plastic), and trash.

Following collection and compaction, the compostable material will be transported by Waste Management, Inc., under a Sodexo contract, to CTI Agricycle LLC, a permitted facility located in the Town of Cambridge (Washington County). There, through the process of aerobic decomposition, the incoming biodegradable cafeteria waste will be turned into nutrient-rich compost. CTI Agricycle first entered the composting business in 1995.

Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Commissioner Pete Grannis said: "Governor Paterson has made sustainability and environmental protection real priorities, through actions big and small. The composting of cafeteria waste from the Empire State Plaza is another step in the 'greening' of New York. Composting not only improves soil health and suppresses plant diseases, but also reduces the amount of waste that ends up in landfills or incinerators."

To facilitate efficient collection and hauling, Waste Management placed a refurbished compactor at one of the Plaza's service docks. The state made modest infrastructure changes to accommodate the additional equipment, with a one-time cost of about \$7,093, funded from the agency's \$73.5 million capital program.

OGS and Sodexo estimate that approximately two tons of material (about half of all waste generated) will be collected and diverted for composting each month when the program is extended to all nine Plaza food service venues.

Sodexo's contract with the state requires that the company comply with Executive Orders No. 4 and No. 111, which both promote sustainable state operations. The program has benefits for all participants.

Sodexo's Senior General Manager Laurie Jenkins said: "Sodexo is proud to partner with the New York State Office of General Services in the furtherance of Governor Paterson's initiative on sustainability. Our journey to seamless sustainability aligns with our mission to consistently make each day a better one for our customers at Empire State Plaza, throughout New York State, across North America, and around the world. We recognize that our actions and decisions impact not only our success, but also the lives of millions of people every day."

Other recent innovative sustainability initiatives spearheaded by OGS include: the installation of a 1.5 kilowatt wind turbine on the Empire State Plaza's Corning Tower; development of purchasing specifications for green products; a commitment to the use of green cleaning products in OGS-managed facilities; and energy conservation measures that resulted in an 8.12 percent reduction in energy use in fiscal year 2008-09.

As part of New York's commemoration of the 40th Anniversary of Earth Day, Governor Paterson continues to demonstrate a clear commitment to clean air, clean water, healthy communities, fighting climate change, and promoting renewable energy policies. He is a vocal advocate for clean water investments and "greening" state government.

The Governor's specific achievements include New York's historic participation and leadership role in addressing global warming with the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, and accomplishing what previous Governors could not by getting the Legislature to finally pass the Bigger, Better, Bottle Bill. By adopting an ambitious but achievable 45 by 15 clean energy goal (45 percent of New York's electricity from renewables and efficiency by 2015), Governor Paterson has set New York on a path to become the global leader in the clean energy economy, creating green jobs, boosting the economy, and protecting the environment.