



County Environmental Charge and Food Scrap Bag Programs

County Environmental Charge – Program Overview

The County Environmental Charge (CEC) is a service fee applied to the cost of trash collection and disposal service, fuel surcharges, account start-up or cancellation fees and any other administrative fees in Ramsey and Washington counties. The CEC does not apply to the cost of recycling, which includes material that is composted. The [Washington County CEC](#) rate is set at 35% for both residential and commercial customers and is governed by [Solid Waste Ordinance #194](#). The [Ramsey County CEC](#) rate is set at 28% for residential customers and transfer stations, and 53% for commercial customers, and is governed by Section 23 of the [Solid Waste Ordinance #B2017-257](#). Trash haulers bill their customers, collect the CEC, and report and remit it to the county on a regular (e.g., monthly) basis.

Food Scraps Bag Program – Program Overview

Food scraps comprise about 22% of trash collected in Ramsey and Washington counties, by weight. The counties are developing a new way to recover this material so that it can be converted into soil and energy. Recovering food scraps from trash will help reach the state’s recycling goals and provide health, environmental, and economic benefits to the community. Food scraps will be collected from residents using food scrap bags co-collected with trash. With this system, food scrap bags go in the regular trash and are separated at the R&E Center. From there, they would be sent to a compost site or anaerobic digestion facility. The food scrap bags are compostable and will be provided to residents of both counties at no cost.

Impact of Food Scraps Program on the Cost of Trash Service and the CEC

In preparing for the food scrap program, the counties evaluated if participating in the program should entitle a resident or a business to a credit or deduction to the CEC charged on the cost of trash service because the bags and contents would be recycled (composted) and there is no cost to the resident’s trash bill for this service. Following a thorough analysis, the counties have determined that there will be no CEC credit or deduction for those who participate in the food scraps program, for the following reasons:

- Similar to the state’s [Solid Waste Management Tax](#), the CEC in both counties is based on the fair market value of trash collection and disposal services. The food scraps program would not impact the fair market value of a hauler’s cost of service because there is no additional cost to the hauler for servicing a program participant.
- The food scraps would be delivered to an MSW facility, such as the R&E Center or an approved transfer station. County ordinances provide that the service cost for any waste delivered to a MSW facility is subject to the CEC.
- The counties will provide the bags used to collect food scraps at no additional cost to participants.
- The counties pay the cost of removing the food scrap bags from the trash so they can be composted or sent to an anaerobic digestion facility.

Questions?

For questions regarding this fact sheet, please contact:

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