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SC DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE:
FOOD WASTE RECOVERY EVENT
OCTOBER 6, 2015
GREENVILLE, SC

HOLLY ELMORE
FOUNDER & CEO
ELEMENTAL IMPACT



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Sustainability in ACTION

Work with industry leaders to create best operating practices where the entire value-chain benefits, including corporate bottom lines and the environment. Through education and collaboration, establish the best practices as standard practices.



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A CATALYST

Ei Creates Corporate | Community Initiatives

- ⊙ What could be done
- ⊙ That is not being done
- ⊙ Ei gets it done



Brings the Possible out of Impossible

Identifies Pioneers & Creates Heroes



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ZERO WASTE ZONES

- ⊙ Launched in February 2009
- ⊙ THE forerunner in the commercial collection of food waste for compost
- ⊙ Required food donations in accordance with the Good Samaritan Food Donation Act
- ⊙ Major media: CNN prime time, NY Times front page
- ⊙ Quotes: “This is easy, a no brainer – why would you not collect food waste for compost?!”
- ⊙ 2012 Sold to National Restaurant Association





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PLATFORMS

Ei Platforms:

- ◎ Product Stewardship
Integrity throughout the entire product life-cycle
- ◎ Recycling Refinement
Moving beyond landfill diversion
- ◎ Water Use | Toxicity
The Water Footprint: the new sustainability standard



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RECYCLING REFINEMENT

Recycling Integrity:

*Maintaining maximum Material Value
With Minimal Energy Expended*

Contamination:

An expensive trip to the landfill



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SOURCE-SEPARATED MATERIALS RECYCLING

Contamination is a mistake





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SFCI

Sustainable Food Court Initiative

An Integrated Approach to Sustainability





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Active Pilots

- ⊙ Airport - Atlanta Airport
- ⊙ Shopping Mall - Concord Mills (Charlotte)
- ⊙ Event Venue - Georgia Dome (Atlanta)
- ⊙ Event - LDEI | ATL (Afternoon in the Country)

Focus: Post-Consumer Food Waste





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FOOD COURT CHALLENGES

- ⊙ Waste | recycling & custodial services contracted by landlord or property manager.
- ⊙ Contractual legal restrictions and obligations:
 - Landlord | tenant
 - Franchisee | franchisor
- ⊙ Consumer separation of food waste, recycling and trash.
- ⊙ Third party products brought into food court by consumer.
- ⊙ F&B packaging used in front and back-of-house by foodservice operators





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Atlanta Airport

- ◎ Concessionaire contracts compostable packaging provision
- ◎ Compostable Foodservice Ware Packet
- ◎ Materials Usage Form



Compostable Foodservice Ware Program

Introduction

Many event venues, office buildings, malls, airports and other facilities with food court operations are embarking on the zero waste journey. One of the first steps in the journey is back-of-the-house organics collection for composting as there are no or minimal purchasing changes necessary.

Front-of-the-house collection of food waste and packaging is the next stage in zero waste practices and may involve significant modification to current foodservice packaging used by operators. With recent product innovations, there are many options available to food service operators.

As a Zero Waste Zone – Atlanta Participant, Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport (HJAA) works closely with the Sustainable Food Court Initiative (SFCI), an Elemental Impact Task Force in partnership with the National Restaurant Association, to bring zero waste practices to the airport operations. The new concessionaire contracts going into effect beginning in 2021 include, among others, the following provision:

"Concessionaire shall use compostable serviceware along with consumer facing packaging and ensure separate all food service wastes for direct transport to off-airport composting facilities."

This document's intent is to provide clear, concise information:

- (1) To allow concessionaires to satisfy the contract provisions stipulated in the Request for Proposal; and
- (2) To ensure effective ongoing communication with product manufacturers and distributors.

The SFCI Team is available to support concessionaires with education and information on compostable packaging. With a solid understanding of the compostable packaging requirements, operators are in a position to work with existing distributors or discover additional options in the marketplace to satisfy the Compostable Foodservice Ware Program guidelines of their foodservice packaging.

For more details, please refer to the information provided below:

- Composting: what is it, why do it, and why it is important at the Atlanta Airport
- The importance of packaging in successful composting
- Compostable foodservice ware contract requirements
- Types of compostable foodservice ware products covered by contract restrictions
- Description of compostable foodservice product types
- Resources for more information
- Frequently Asked Questions





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Georgia Dome

- ◎ Compostable packaging
- ◎ Tailgate recycling
- ◎ Suites zero food waste
- ◎ Source-separated materials





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Compostable F&B Packaging Education Session

- ◎ Requested by GWCCA Director of Sustainability for Levy Restaurants
- ◎ Developed by SMAT – Sustainable Material ACTION Team
- ◎ Valuable industry tool
- ◎ Bottom line: BPI Compostable Certified!





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Concord Mills

- ◎ Back-of-the-house food waste collection for compost implemented in 2011
- ◎ Plastic film recycling program initiated in 2012
- ◎ Food donation program launched in 2012
- ◎ Overhauled food court in 2015 - in holding pattern





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EPA Grant Scaling Up Composting in Charlotte

- ◎ Ei Strategic Ally Sustainable Packaging Coalition is Grantee; Ei is subgrantee
- ◎ SMAT - Sustainable Materials ACTION Team - formed during Charlotte visit to support the grant, SFCI & S-SMRT
- ◎ Solid Charlotte relationships from early SFCI - Concord Mills formation days growing stronger
- ◎ Grant extension



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EVENT CHALLENGES

Afternoon in the Country

- ⊙ **Annual Event** – challenging to set standard operating practices with one year intervals; may lack consistent contracted staff & volunteers.
- ⊙ **Event Facility Parameters** – recycling & food waste programs may experience limitations due to existing facility contracts with haulers or other parameters
- ⊙ **Donated Food from Multiple Chefs | Restaurants** – coordinating new food serviceware and other restrictions on what may be brought to event with a multitude of chefs & restaurateurs.





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STAGE IMPLEMENTED PROGRAM

Afternoon in the Country

- ◎ Focus on zero food waste in 2015; move to zero waste in future years
- ◎ Ensure all F&B serviceware at AITC is reusable, recyclable or compostable
- ◎ Work with Serenbe on on-farm food waste composting
- ◎ Craft an event day game plan for clean recycling & food waste stream.

Baby Steps, *lots of baby steps*, are Key!



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SUSTAINABILITY IN ACTION

Sustainable F&B Packaging Value Chain Annual December Meeting





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Sustainable F&B Packaging Value Chain Annual December Meeting

- ⊙ Hosted at Global Green's D.C. offices
- ⊙ Leadership from trade associations & NGOs within entire F&B packaging value chain
- ⊙ Powerful industry discussions & strategy sessions
- ⊙ Mission accomplished!





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WHERE, OH WHERE, IS OUR SOIL?

The Earth's soils are depleted AND disappearing:

- ◎ Since 1960, an estimated 33% of the world's arable land was lost through erosion & other degradation.
 - Due to soy production, Brazil loses 55 tons of topsoil each year
- ◎ 33% of soil is moderately to highly degraded due to erosion, nutrient depletion, acidification, salinization, compaction and chemical pollution; farmers abandon depleted soil and move to productive soil.
- ◎ Globally, the land used and abandoned in the last 50 years may be equal to the amount of land used today.



Photo courtesy of soilerosion.net



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EROSION IS EXPENSIVE!

Sediment is the #1 pollutant in
US waterways

*The cost of soil erosion in the U.S. is an
estimated \$44 Billion*





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HEALTHY SOIL = WELL-STRUCTURED SOIL

Soil is a living eco-system filled with active microbial communities

Healthy, well-structured soil:

- ◎ Retains approximately 40% more water.
- ◎ Cleans storm & surface water as it filters to aquifers & underground waterways.
- ◎ Produces nutritious food for humans, animals, birds, insects and plants.



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FEED THE BUGS, SAVE THE SOILS!

- ◎ Compost is Nature's food for the soil microbial communities.
- ◎ Food waste is a key ingredient in the compost recipe.
- ◎ Soils rebuild when the microbial communities are well-fed and nurtured.





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QUALITY MATTERS FOR COMPOST

- ⊙ Contaminants in compost may result in poison to the microbial community.
- ⊙ Microplastics are an increasing issue in soil contamination.



Microplastics on a penny
Photo courtesy of National Geographic

***Collecting clean food waste streams for
compost is key to rebuilding our soils***



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