



Mayor Gavin Newsom  
City of San Francisco  
City Hall, Room 200  
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlet Place  
San Francisco, CA 94102

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*Center for Media and Democracy*

Dear Mayor Newsom,

We, the undersigned organizations, speaking on behalf of thousands of backyard, neighborhood, and school gardeners; landscapers, consumers, farmers, students, and area residents, demand that the city of San Francisco stop giving away or selling toxic municipal sewage sludge under the guise of it being "organic compost" or fertilizer. Since 2007 San Francisco has given away 125 tons of sewage sludge to area school and community gardeners, misrepresenting it as "organic compost."

USDA National Organic Program regulations strictly prohibit the use of sewage sludge on organic farms, ranches, or gardens, making the city's marketing or promotion of its sludge as "organic fertilizer" or compost inherently fraudulent and misleading. Even worse, a critical mass of scientific studies indicate that municipal sewage sludge routinely contains thousands of dangerous pathogens, toxic heavy metals, flame retardants, endocrine disruptors, carcinogens, pharmaceutical drugs and other hazardous chemicals coming from residential drains, storm water runoff, hospitals, and industrial plants.

Given that the city of San Francisco has officially endorsed the "precautionary principle" as a guideline for all city policies and practices, and given that it is impossible to test for the thousands of toxins and pathogens and combinations of toxins and pathogens in sludge, it is therefore totally unacceptable for the city to give away or sell its sewage sludge.

Giving away or selling sewage sludge, under the guise of it being "organic fertilizer" or compost, amounts to a slap in the face for the nation's 50 million organic consumers and farmers, who sincerely believe that the word "organic" is a guarantee of safety and environmental sustainability, and who have worked for decades to protect organic standards and maintain the integrity of the term "organic."

Beyond degrading organic standards, giving away or selling San Francisco's sewage sludge, under any circumstances, even if city officials stop calling it "organic" and use another misleading term like "harmless biosolids," poses an unacceptable risk to public health and the environment and must be stopped.

ORGANIC CONSUMERS ASSOCIATION  
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We look forward to the Mayor's office and the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission doing the right thing. Stop selling or giving away toxic sewage sludge. Acknowledge sewage sludge for what it is, hazardous waste, and keep it out of the environment and the food chain. Otherwise we can guarantee you that this controversy will escalate, and that the green reputation of the city and its leaders will be seriously tarnished.

For a Green Future,

Organic Consumers Association  
Consumers Union  
Arc Ecology  
California Communities Against Toxics  
Center for Environmental Health  
California Food & Justice Coalition  
Center for Food Safety  
Center for Health, Environment & Justice  
Earth Share California  
East Bay Green Tours  
Ecology Center  
Food First (Institute for Food and Development Policy)  
GAIA (Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives)  
Green Café Network  
Help for Sewage Victims  
Lessing/Sears Community Garden  
Local Harvest  
MOMAS (Mothers of Marin Against the Spray)  
North Berkeley Harvest  
People's Grocery  
Planting Justice  
Safe Food and Fertilizer  
San Francisco Green Party  
Teamsters Union  
United Sludge-Free Alliance