

ENERGY MANAGER TODAY

Metro Portland Announces New Plant To Turn Food Scraps Into Energy

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In Oregon, the Metro Portland government began negotiations to site a plant for converting the region's food scraps into energy, the [Portland Tribune reported](#). Local officials hope that a new anaerobic digester will effectively turn food waste into energy.

Prior to the start of negotiations for the plant, Portland had a series of failed projects involving attempts to recycle food waste. They include a composting site that prompted numerous complaints about odor and a project on Columbia Boulevard that never went forward, the Portland Tribune's Steve Law reported. Meanwhile, the scraps continued to pile up.

"Food is the single largest portion of the garbage greater Portland throws away every year," the [Metro government site says](#). "Nearly a fifth of the garbage the region currently sends to landfills is food waste — that's enough to fill 5,000 long-haul trucks."

This month a panel of officials selected Houston-based Waste Management to develop the new anaerobic digester and negotiations are currently under way, Law reported. "Anaerobic digesters deploy bacteria in airless chambers to break down food and other organic material and convert it to biogas, which can then be used for vehicle fuel, natural gas or electricity," he explained. The plant is expected to be constructed in North Portland near the existing sewage treatment plant.

In order to guarantee that there will be enough material to feed the new waste-to-energy plant, Metro Portland is working on a mandate requiring large businesses and institutions to separate out their food scraps, Law reported. He also noted that, if approved by the Metro Council in July, the first phase of the mandate would start in March 2020 and apply to companies producing more than 1,000 pounds of food scraps weekly.