Farmingville, NY - The following are statements in response to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's (DEC) modification of Great Gardens' (aka Long Island Compost) Solid Waste Management Facility permit. The modification is a result of complaints regarding activities at the yard waste transfer facility in Yaphank, and their failure to control off-site migration of odor and dust caused by activities at the facility. The modification means that all processing, tipping, sorting, storage, and compaction areas at this facility must be located within an enclosed building. On-site storage of compost products that continue to undergo the decomposition process will be prohibited.

Brookhaven Town Supervisor Mark Lesko said, "In recent weeks I, along with Senator Zeldin and Assemblyman Murray, have been in frequent contact with DEC regarding Great Gardens. We were assured that DEC was conducting a top-to-bottom review of their operations and DEC permit. DEC's notification of significant modifications of Great Gardens' permit reflects the results of that comprehensive review. I commend Governor Cuomo, Commissioner Martens, and Regional Director Peter Scully for their quick and professional review of this matter. The DEC's actions will result in an improved quality of life for the residents who live near Great Gardens."

"In June, the Compost Committee, which I created and chaired, offered recommendations on how to address the concerns at LI Compost. Those recommendations included many of the steps taken by the DEC today. As Councilwoman I have worked with Supervisor Lesko to pass 2 sense resolutions asking the DEC to adopt site specific air quality standards and amend their regulations so that processing of mulch is no longer an exempt activity. This step in enclosing all materials at LI compost of more than 50,000 cubic yards or 12,500 tons of solid waste annually is a step in the right direction in improving the lives of the residents I represent in the Hamlet of Yaphank," said Councilwoman Connie Kepert.

"After months of working together with residents, civic groups, the owners and DEC officials, these recommendations are yet another step in reducing and eliminating the source of odors and dust that have affected the community, and allowing this business to continue to operate and perform the important service they provide for our community, and the environment," said Assemblyman Murray.

"In the last few months, we've been working in a good faith effort with LI Compost, the surrounding community, including the Brookhaven Community Coalition (BCC), and the DEC to bring a new spirit of effective cooperation to the long time concerns of local residents," said Senator Zeldin. "I look forward to working with the community and LI Compost to preserve jobs, and promote good relations between LI Compost and its neighbors."

"For six years I have advocated for remedies to the impact of commercial composting on residential communities," stated Legislator Kate Browning. "I directed the Suffolk County Health Department to conduct air quality testing around all of these facilities and Long Island Compost in Yaphank was found to be the worst threat to air quality and public health. On August 12, 2011 I was the first elected official to advocate on behalf of the Brookhaven Community Coalition's request for enclosure and I am grateful for the DEC's actions to remove this variance. This is the right thing to do for the residents who have patiently worked along side us to improve their quality of life."

"This is a landmark victory for Brookhaven residents and it sets a strong precedent for compost facilities across Long Island to work hard to be good neighbors. A giant congratulations to the Brookhaven Community Coalition, a diverse group of over 25 stakeholder organizations, who worked aggressively and collaboratively to make their communities a better place to live. Our goal is for residents to be able to breathe easier and have a better quality of life. We are delighted and heartened that the DEC provided such a thorough and comprehensive ruling," said Adrienne Esposito, Executive Director of Citizens Campaign for the Environment.