# **Research in Progress**

# Compost Blankets for Erosion Control and Vegetation Establishment

#### **Research Need**

MassDOT has been experimenting with "compost blankets" to provide short-term erosion control and also to improve establishment of native vegetation. Given the potential benefits of this technology, it would be beneficial to evaluate how well compost blankets have been working in the field to prevent soil erosion, to aid in the establishment of roadside native grasses and wildflowers, and to ensure that MassDOT specifications are consistent with current practices.

### **Project Information**

This project is being conducted as part of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) Research Program with funding from Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) State Planning and Research (SPR) funds.

**Principal Investigators:** Jack Ahern, Professor of Landscape Architecture

Performing Organization: University of Massachusetts Amherst

**Project Champion:** Stephanie Smoot, MassDOT, Landscape Design

**Project Start Date:** March 2019

**Expected Project Completion Date:** March 2020

#### **Goals/Objectives**

Identify parameters for the most effective use of compost blankets to prevent erosion control and encourage long-term establishment of roadside native grasses and wildflowers. Improve desired outcomes by researching the available information base on compost use and evaluating recent MassDOT projects that have used compost blankets.

## Methodology

To accomplish this objective we will conduct: a literature review of relevant research on the use of compost blankets for erosion control and native vegetation establishment on roadsides; interviews with DOT roadside officials from the Northeastern US; and field observations on selected sites across the Commonwealth.

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