

Executive Order 01.01.2017.13

Waste Reduction and Resource Recovery Plan for Maryland

Goals and Measurements Meeting Minutes

January 31, 2018; 1 p.m.-3 p.m.

The meeting was conducted by Dave Mrgich, Division Chief, Waste Diversion Division of the Maryland Department of the Environment and was attended by various County Recycling Coordinators. The purpose of the meeting was to meet with relevant stakeholders to assess and improve the State's methodology for tracking waste generation, recycling, and source reduction in Maryland.

Obtaining Data from the Business Sector

- Counties noncompliant in meeting their mandatory rates express difficulty in obtaining business recycling data as a contributing factor in their low recycling rates.
- Montgomery County has 45,000 businesses and 6 people working on capturing business recycling data.
- Developing and electronic reporting system.
 - MDE is investigating establishing business and county recycling and waste disposed surveys in online format, potentially to feed county data directly into the MDE's MRA database and business data in Excel format for forwarding to the counties.
 - Counties would be able provide to direct businesses to an online MDE reporting system.
 - For businesses located within counties with mandatory business solid waste reporting requirements, the MDE online reporting would automatically forward them to the appropriate county's web page for them to report their totals.
- A database of email contacts for businesses that may be recycling could assist counties in contacting businesses to request they report.
 - The Recycling Market Directory has some information for recycling businesses, but not for non-recycler businesses.
 - MDE sends out letters for recycling processors, with a response rate of 30% or less.
 - The MDE online reporting system would be able to be used by both recycling processors and non-processors of recyclables.

- MDE will review current Maryland county business recycling reporting forms to develop MDE's online reporting system. The review will ensure a simplified reporting system that only collects pertinent information.
- Counting recycling for businesses that send waste disposed out of state (bypassing Maryland permitted facilities) is difficult because businesses must report the quantity of waste disposed and sent directly out of state in order for the recycling from the business to count.
 - Most businesses do not know the destination of their disposed waste and, consequently, if their waste hauler is sending their waste directly out of State for disposal.
- Processors believe that waste disposed and recycling tonnages should come from the businesses directly, and are often unwilling to provide the information on behalf of their customers.
- There was discussion regarding who should report (businesses, processors, or both) waste disposed and recycled data?
 - Business reports and processor reports must be crosschecked against one another (QA/QC) to ensure no double counting of waste.
 - The processor report should be mandatory. The counties are unable to get them to report because reporting it is currently voluntary.
 - Collector and processor data is more accurate than data provided by businesses because it is scale-house data rather than estimates by businesses based on volume (number of cans/dumpsters, etc.). However, the downside is that material that goes directly to an out-of-state processor would only be reported by a business as out of state facilities do not report to Maryland.
 - Business reporting should be a priority because after that, the material can go to many facilities and change hands multiple times, and the tracking through this process is not tracked.
 - Haulers cross county lines when collecting waste, thereby, county origination totals are estimated.
 - Businesses would be in the best position to report their data. However, this would require an additional responsibility on businesses, as businesses do not know the specifics of their waste generated. Haulers would need to track and report waste pick-up business-by-business, and record the totals as pick-up occurs. Additional hauler resources would be necessary to track and report the data is this method.
 - Processors accept materials from multiple jurisdictions and may have difficulty assigning origination totals.
- Other business ideas were suggested.
 - Waste audits for the largest businesses should be required.
 - The State should work with manufacturers on "upstream" waste reduction.

- Businesses generating paper should be required to contract with a hauler for recycling (paper being a primary material found in the waste stream).

Possible recommendation: Target reporting from businesses. MDE should develop a simple, online reporting vehicle for businesses. MDE should develop the system to work with counties already requiring business reporting. Counties should direct businesses to the MDE reporting system.

Alternative Metrics for Measuring State Waste Diversion Rates

MDE staff gave a presentation on potential alternative metrics to the current recycling rate, including metrics used in other states. The following input was provided by meeting attendees on potential alternative metrics.

- Metrics that can factor in the cost of a program while taking into account the value/income derived from the materials would be helpful.
- Metrics selected should use the data as it is currently collected to eliminate the need to track recycling, waste diversion, or SMM separately.
- Examine recycling and source reduction on a regional [State] basis rather than by county. County recycling minimums could be established if the region [State] does not meet the mandatory rate and performance improvements on the worst performing counties could be imposed.
- Data could be evaluated on a per capita basis.
- Environmental performance metrics with a fixed baseline could be used and a goal established based on those metrics.

Source Reduction (SR) Credit

- Current SR organics activities could not be limited to yard waste; include food scraps initiatives in Part 1 of the SR Checklist where 1 activity earns 1 SR credit.
- The number of source reduction activities available for credit could be revised/increased to reflect current SR practices.
- The total SR credit could be increased from 5 percent as an incentive to counties to increase their SR activities.
- The States waste diversion goal (*i.e.*, recycling + SR) could be revised and made mandatory (SR is voluntary county activity). This would provide an incentive to the counties to conduct SR activities.