

Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC) Meeting Summary
June 25, 2009

Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection Updates

Solid Waste Master Plan (SWMP)

John Fischer, MassDEP, gave a brief update on the development of the new Solid Waste Master Plan. MassDEP has engaged in an extensive public process over the past year, including holding a set of broad public meeting discussions in December 2008 and January 2009 and a series of more extensive workgroup discussions in February and March 2009. Workgroup materials and meeting notes have been posted on the MassDEP web site at:
<http://www.mass.gov/dep/public/committee/swmpwkgp.htm>

MassDEP is continuing to work internally on preparing the new draft Solid Waste Master Plan. MassDEP still expects to issue the draft Master Plan publicly later this summer and to hold public hearings and a public comment period this fall. MassDEP would then prepare a final Solid Waste Master Plan by the end of 2009 or in early 2010.

Global Warming Solutions Act

Jim Colman, MassDEP, provided an update on implementation of the Global Warming Solutions Act (GWSA), covering three areas:

1. Mandatory Greenhouse Gas Reporting Regulations
2. 1990 Baseline Emissions and 2020 Business as Usual Projection
3. 2020 Emissions Reduction Target and Plan

1. Mandatory Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Reporting Regulations: These regulations have been finalized and will be published in the Massachusetts Register dated June 26, 2009. The regulations require certain facilities to report greenhouse gas emissions for 2009 by the first quarter of 2010. This applies to any stationary source that releases over 5,000 tons per year of GHGs or that has an operating permit under the Clean Air Act. One issue that arose was whether there should be a requirement for third-party verification of reporting. Third-party verification is required in the final regulations, although the process has been modified to be less onerous. More information on these regulations can be found on the MassDEP website at
<http://www.mass.gov/dep/air/climate/index.htm#reporting>.

A participant asked how these reporting regulations will relate to the EPA GHG reporting regulations expected to be issued in Fall 2009. MassDEP does not know the answer to this question yet, but will consider modifying the Massachusetts regulations if needed to ensure consistency with the EPA regulations.

2. 1990 Baseline and 2020 Business as Usual Projection: MassDEP issued a draft 1990 Emissions Baseline Analysis and a 2020 “business as usual” projection for comment earlier this year. The 1990 baseline will be used as the basis for measuring future emission reductions for

2020, 2050, and interim emission reduction targets in 2030 and 2040. The 2020 business as usual projection does not have any formal regulatory effect, but provides an improved understanding for how far we need to go in terms of future emission reductions. MassDEP held six public meetings and a formal public hearing on the draft baseline and business as usual scenario and will be publishing a revised analysis, including some changes in response to comments, within the next week. These documents can be found on the MassDEP web site at: <http://www.mass.gov/dep/air/climate/index.htm#assessment>.

3. 2020 Emissions Reduction Target and Plan: By January 1, 2011, Massachusetts must establish a target for reducing emissions by 2020, along with a plan for achieving those reductions. Massachusetts has established a GWSA Advisory Committee and has established a series of interagency workgroups to develop policy recommendations in different policy areas. Most of these groups will be holding public meetings in July to hear input from experts regarding greenhouse gas reductions in each of these areas. These groups will then be holding a second round of public meetings this fall to discuss potential options and alternatives for achieving these reductions. One of these workgroups is focused on Materials and Waste Management, which will be closely linked to the development of Massachusetts' new Solid Waste Master Plan. More information on these meetings can be found on the MassDEP web site at http://www.mass.gov/dep/air/climate/ghg_epd.htm.

A participant asked how waste exported out of state will be counted in this assessment and argued that emissions from Massachusetts waste disposed at out-of-state disposal facilities should be counted in the emissions inventory. Jim Colman responded that, while there is a specific statutory provision to address emissions from out-of-state electricity sources, in most cases, including this one, the statute is focused only on in-state sources and emissions from activities at out-of-state facilities are not counted in the baseline inventory.

A participant asked whether the state plans to use a model like the one in the Tellus Report for calculating GHG emissions from waste management activities. John Fischer responded that MassDEP will consider multiple analyses and sources of information, including but not limited to the Tellus Report. As the baseline inventory is structured, emission reductions achieved through lifecycle recycling benefits will not be counted as part of the 1990 baseline and the future emissions reductions. A participant commented that it is important to be able to accurately measure and give credit for these types of emission reductions.

Sustainable Materials Recovery Program (SMRP)

Greg Cooper, MassDEP, presented a brief slide show (see accompanying handout) on the Green Communities Act and potential new funding for waste reduction and recycling that would be available from the sale of Class II Renewable Energy Credits (RECs) generated by municipal waste combustors. MassDEP is developing a framework for the Sustainable Materials Recovery Program (SMRP), a grant program being designed to support the Solid Waste Master Plan. Greg invited participants to share inputs and ideas for ways the SMRP could foster increased waste reduction and recovery in Massachusetts.

Suggestions from the group are shown below under headings of Municipal/ Residential Waste Reduction, Commercial Waste Reduction, and Recycling Market Development.

Municipal/Residential Waste Reduction

- MassDEP should ensure a simple, straightforward grant application process, so that a consultant doesn't have to be hired to do the application.
- The program should be flexible enough to help towns to support and maintain existing recycling programs.
- Local government needs help on monitoring and enforcement of commercial use of hazardous materials and wastes.
- It would be better to set the program goals, then let communities come up with their own ways to accomplish those goals, rather than ruling out specific categories of funding.
- Funding should be allowed to be used for collection equipment such as bins or carts, processing equipment for recycling or compost sites, and operational costs to support new program development, depending on what municipalities need.
- Several participants urged MassDEP to reinstate the Municipal Recycling Incentive Program (MRIP). This was enormously helpful to communities as it gave them flexibility in using program payments, which in turn provided important status and leverage for municipal recycling coordinators. Together with the MACs (Municipal Assistance Coordinators) providing market information and sharing techniques, MRIP was an excellent program.
- Perhaps this funding could be used for seed money for a Massachusetts Product Stewardship Council, that is, a group of cities and towns promoting extended producer responsibility (EPR).

Greg replied that there may be issues about how state funding is used (e.g., cannot be used to fund lobbying activities), so this may depend on how a group like this is structured and how the funding would be used.

- Municipalities are losing funds or seeing cuts in funds for managing household hazardous waste (HHW), and that this is also affecting Very Small Quantity Generator (VSQG) programs. MassDEP should include funding for HHW programs as part of the SMRP.
- Communities feel that MassDEP's Toolkit has been very helpful in supporting municipal recycling and waste reduction programs and would be interested in expanded toolkit materials.
- MassDEP should increase funding incentives for municipalities to establish PAYT programs.
- MassDEP should consider how to support recycling programs in municipalities where some or most residents are served by private subscription haulers.
- Training and certification of recycling personnel, such as recycling program managers, is really important. Towns are at a loss because there is no way to evaluate applicants' training and credentials. SWANA training courses are good, but they are generally not offered in Massachusetts on a regular basis, except for the SWANA WasteCon conference coming to Boston in 2010.
- MassDEP should look into ways to set standards for skills and training needed by recycling program managers and fund a training and credentialing program.

- MassDEP should allocate funding to a public education campaign, including increasing factsheets and other education materials that municipalities can use.

Commercial Waste Reduction

- Small and medium-sized businesses are left out of recycling programs because of issues like storage space and collection cost; it is necessary to figure out ways to cost-effectively capture recyclables from these generators.
- Expanding municipal drop-off recycling centers would help them serve small businesses more effectively. These were only designed to handle residential users, but many could be expanded to cost-effectively service small businesses.
- Business recycling assistance programs such as business assistance coordinators would be valuable, as there is very little recycling assistance available to businesses in Massachusetts.
- Businesses also need waste reduction and source reduction technical assistance; for example, services by an industrial engineer to change production methods to eliminate front-end wastes and process wastes.
- MassDEP should provide funding and assistance to farmers to purchase processing equipment, especially for screening, to improve recovery of organic materials. Helping these farms to install equipment will make farm-based composting operations more viable.
- Funding for equipment and staffing for organics programs, and especially food waste composting, can't be emphasized enough. Some programs have only now figured out how to successfully compost yard waste, and need to be helped in taking on the risk and added costs of expanding to food waste.
- As with municipalities, MassDEP should make the grant application process simple for businesses.
- Partnerships between municipalities and local businesses should be fostered to provide shared product take-back services. Some businesses may be able to help municipalities because they may be well set-up to take back products after use.
- Commercial programs need cooperative recyclable materials marketing or regionalization to get materials to market and support cost-effective programs.
- Massachusetts should encourage recycling and repair of older buildings by comparing the GHG benefits of retaining and repairing the old structures versus building new.

Market Development

- Does Massachusetts have enough compost capacity so that we could increase collection of food waste?

Greg Cooper replied that Massachusetts has sufficient capacity in some parts of the state to handle existing collection, but not enough to handle increased collection of food waste and that increased organics composting capacity will likely be a priority.

The group discussed the pros and cons of single-stream recycling. Comments from participants included:

- To help markets, MassDEP should stop pushing single stream so strongly, as there is too much contamination and mills have trouble processing the quality of materials they are receiving from single stream collection.
- When recyclables are shipped to export markets, we may not see or get clear data on the percentage of the recyclables that are contaminated. Maybe MRFs should be rewarded for having a low percentage of residuals, as this would be an indication that they have gotten the recyclable stream as clean as possible.
- What data does DEP have on the effectiveness of single stream? Is there a study using controls that shows whether the increased recycling in single-stream programs is due to single-stream collection, as opposed to improved education or other factors?

Greg replied that MassDEP has data from municipal single-stream recycling programs in Massachusetts and data from processors and mills on residuals. In addition, a consultant (DSM) did a study for MassDEP on single stream. This data shows significant increases in recycling rates, as well as reductions in collection costs, without a significant increase in residuals. The major processors are moving towards single stream. It is assumed that mills are making capital investments needed to accept and process single stream materials.

- Regarding the switch to single stream, does this still allow organics collection to be added via a second bin?

Brooke Nash of MassDEP replied that San Francisco's program does the Fantastic Three, meaning one "single-stream" bin for recyclables, one for organics, and one for waste. Single-stream recycling would be consistent with this type of collection model for organics.

- Does the quantity of residuals extracted at processors get counted in recycling rates in Massachusetts?

John Fischer replied that, for the purpose of calculating statewide recycling tonnage and rates, the residual tonnage disposed of from MRFs does get identified and subtracted out, so it is not counted as recycling. For calculating residential recycling rates by municipality, municipalities report and MassDEP counts all material sent to a MRF for recycling, and, in this case, any recycling residuals that are sent for disposal are not subtracted out.

- A participant suggested that the amount of residuals from MRFs should be tracked, then that residual percentage can be allocated to the towns using the MRFs.
- New Bedford does dual stream recycling and strongly supports this approach. With it, their materials are cleaner, and in the recent market downturn their markets turned from negative back to positive faster than for single stream programs. Also, New Bedford has a wider choice of markets.
- If MassDEP wants development of better recycling markets, GHG metrics need to be improved. The GWSA metrics discussed earlier provide a disincentive for higher grade recycling because no credit is given for recycling, whereas exporting waste for disposal

would reduce GHG emissions relative to the GWSA baseline emissions. Massachusetts should use a carbon footprint metric like the west coast uses that would more accurately assign the GHG benefits of recycling different material streams.

- MassDEP should support the development of market specifications for materials that could be aligned with quality levels required by manufacturers. Or, specifications could be developed based on the quality of recovered materials, then companies could be encouraged to develop products that can be made from materials meeting those specifications. This process would connect well with a waste exchange.

Other Questions and Comments

- A participant asked how much funding is expected to become available through the MWC Class II RECs.

Greg replied that the Department of Energy Resources has estimated that the sale of the RECS could generate \$12-16 million per year, with 50 percent of this amount, or \$6-8 million per year, going towards funding recycling programs.

- A participant asked how often MassDEP will solicit applications for funding.

Greg replied that the cycle will be at least annual, but some grants may be for more than a single year. In addition, applications for different program areas may be staggered over the course of the year (e.g., residential program funding applications in the fall and commercial program funding applications in the spring.)

- Several participants recommended that MassDEP maintain flexibility in the program, so that MassDEP can provide municipalities with more flexibility on how to use funds and MassDEP can fund promising funding requests that do not fall into specified categories.

Greg responded that MassDEP expects to establish program funding categories in line with SWMP priorities, although there will likely be some room to fund more customized proposals.

Next Meeting

The next scheduled meeting of the Solid Waste Advisory Committee is set for Thursday, October 22, 2009. MassDEP may schedule another SWAC meeting before then regarding the Solid Waste Master Plan. If so, MassDEP will send an email announcement to the SWAC list.