

**Solid Waste Master Plan Workgroup on Reducing Waste Generation
Summary Notes of Meeting #2, March 11, 2009**

Introduction

Twenty people attended the second meeting of this workgroup on Reducing Waste Generation. Greg Cooper provided a recap of the group's last meeting and asked for any comments on the notes that were prepared. No comments were provided.

Greg announced that MassDEP would be signing a Memorandum of Agreement (MOU) with the Massachusetts Food Association targeting the reduction of paper and plastic bag distribution by one-third by 2013. The group discussed the initiative. Suggestions were made to emphasize training for supermarket staff, to look at the life-cycle costs of plastic bags vs. canvas bags, and to establish recycling for worn canvas bags.

Business Waste Reduction

Greg highlighted the Department's efforts in Resource Management as an example of changing the way solid waste services are contracted. Rick Frade, a solid waste and recycling hauler, is working with Bridgewater State College on their Resource Management contracting initiative and explained that one of the benefits is looking at all of their programs more consistently and enabling better communication across disparate parts of the college, which can result in additional diversion opportunities and cost savings.

The group discussed ways that businesses can reduce waste. It was mentioned that senior management involvement is key to these types of initiatives. These initiatives should also not impact the competitiveness of Massachusetts businesses by avoiding specific requirements. An example was provided of how Polariod reduced cardboard generation by moving to reusable containers in their supply chain. EPR programs may put Massachusetts businesses at a competitive disadvantage compared with those in neighboring states, particularly if EPR requirements were not flexible.

It was suggested that MassDEP focus on the hospitality and conference sector by promoting green conference standards and assisting hotels and convention/meeting venues to meet/exceed these standards. The sector also does a lot of renovation where the reuse or recycling of these items could easily be incorporated.

Participants suggested that tax incentives or other financial incentives be provided to companies that conduct waste audits with waste reduction measures.

Participants suggested Chambers of Commerce as a venue to reach businesses (particularly small and medium sized businesses) and provide them assistance in waste reduction.

Greg Cooper suggested that a model from the Massachusetts Toxics Use Reduction Act (TURA) could be used which promotes the development of a [Resource Conservation](#)

Plan. The group suggested that it could be required of all businesses, government agencies, and institutions over 200 employees. It was suggested that trainers/planners like toxics use reduction planners under TURA could assist these companies.

Participants suggested that there should be a focus on sectors, specifically schools, with case studies and technical assistance tools. This could include working with other state agencies that establish food nutrition requirements that result in excessive amounts of food waste.

MassDEP should work more closely with haulers and provide a forum for the exchange of ideas by generators and haulers for reducing waste. The volatility of recycling markets was said to prohibit longer term planning of programs.

Procurement Issues

Participants recommended that reuse of delivery boxes from mail orders should be addressed. Greg mentioned that the state is working on this issue with its office supply contract. Similar measures could be incorporated into other procurement contracts.

There was a discussion on the need to increase construction material reuse. Greg stated that the department is working on an industrial materials exchange. The state could specify reprocessed gravel in its construction projects. Reuse of wood pallets could also be required through procurement contracts.

MassDEP was asked to investigate how to reduce fast food waste and hold producers of this waste responsible.

There are opportunities to reduce paper use through electronic pay stub systems and increased electronic submittal of documents (e.g., eliminate paper submittals of contracting documents.)

There may be opportunities for state agencies and institutions to reuse good quality materials from the hospitality industry (e.g., furniture, towels, carpet).

Extended Producer Responsibility

The group revisited its discussion on extended producer responsibility from the first meeting. Framework legislation was suggested with the understanding that MassDEP would be provided the regulatory authority to establish areas and materials of focus. EPR was said to save municipalities money, encourage product design, and increase recycling. Target recovery goals should be set.

Regional EPR should be pursued but there also may be examples of where state EPR has been effective. Some concerns were expressed about EPR on the state level potentially putting Massachusetts businesses at a competitive disadvantage compared to those in neighboring states.

Packaging and electronics were suggested as areas of focus for EPR. Participants generally agreed that manufacturers should have flexibility to determine the best approach for managing their products after use. Holding individual brand owners responsible for their own products appears to have the greatest benefit for influencing product design changes.

A significant amount of information was provided on the successes of EPR in Europe and Asia. This information was sent to workgroup members in an earlier email.

Next Meeting

The third and final meeting of the workgroup on Reducing Waste Generation will be held on Wednesday, March 25, from 1:00 – 4:00 pm at MassDEP in Boston. At this meeting, the group will review a summary of the suggestions and ideas raised by the workgroup through the first two meetings, ensure that it is complete, and address any remaining issues that were not adequately covered in the first two meetings.