

Solid Waste Master Plan – Education Workgroup #3 – March 26, 2009

Solid Waste Master Plan Development: MassDEP expects to publish a draft SWMP this summer, with public hearings scheduled after Labor Day.

10 year Education Plan –Start with Mass Recycles Paper Campaign www.massrecyclespaper.org and add additional materials through years.

State Funding:

- How much can MassDEP commit to funding these education campaigns? MassDEP used to sponsor public/private partnerships (e.g., Chelsea Center and Waste Cap) that went under due to lack of funding
- State funding is not likely. MassDEP doesn't expect to have funds for municipal grants (current programs). We do not know how much money will be raised through waste to energy credits (WECs). If enacted, the expanded Bottle Bill may provide some funds, but this is very uncertain.
- We need to figure out how to meet our education goals without relying on state funds for support.

The group reviewed a preliminary draft strategy for educating residents, businesses, and public school students about diverting materials from disposal and maximizing re-use, recycling, composting, etc. This strategy is posted with these meeting notes on the MassDEP website.

Comments and suggested changes in the preliminary draft strategy:

1. GOAL: Add waste reduction, add “through education” or “through outreach”.

2. OVERALL APPROACH:

- Move line from 2A Residential section “ Work with partners to identify specific targets for phase of on-going campaign...” to Overall Approach
 - Agreed that MassDEP should work with partners to establish advisory committee focused on education.
 - Need to recognize efforts of local recycling committees. These committees often make local programs work when a municipality does not have an active recycling coordinator.
 - Consider developing, implementing education programs on a regional basis (account for regional differences in needs, programs, easier access to training, etc.). Possible models may be CA Integrated Waste Board, MA emergency responder regional groups.
- Consider establishing a certification program for local coordinators, committee members, etc., to ensure that they are trained and understand the range of things they can do.
 - PA program (Prop 101) and Maine may provide good models
 - Alternatively, require that municipal officials attend established recycling/composting meetings or training sessions
 - Need to educate municipal officials about why recycling is important and the accomplishments of local coordinators

3. EDITS OF DRAFT MESSAGES:

- Flip order = Businesses #1, Residents #2.
 - Residents need to hear that recycling is not going in trash.

- Focus on encouraging buying recycled.
- Buying materials made with recycled content: perception is that recycled material is poor quality (e.g., carpet, Trex lumber, etc.)
 - When company's sell "recycled" labeled products, sales go down.
 - Same products without "recycled" label are more successful.
 - Need to bust myths and break down people's perceptions that recycled products are inferior
- Include climate benefits from recycling
 - Target materials that create greenhouse gases when they're being disposed of (food waste)
 - Target materials that create greenhouse gases when making virgin materials (aluminum)
- Enforcement messages are important. The group discussed whether they are more successful at getting people to recycle than other messages.
- Who should keep a master list of all town recycling programs, what materials are covered, etc.?
 - MassDEP should focus its education efforts on the materials that are common to all recycling programs (and waste ban materials)
 - MRFs and haulers are sources of information about the materials that they handle. Some towns have different contracts with their haulers that address different recycling materials.
 - This could be resolved by the proposed education advisory group.
- Under MassDEP – make sure to recommend that municipal assistance coordinators (MACs) be maintained.
- Consider identifying target waste streams beyond paper: containers, bulky waste
- Glad to see that "Business Assistance Coordinators" were included.
- Under businesses, make sure to add "Value added as being a green business"
- Recognition for businesses and recycling coordinators cannot be undervalued. Awards from both MassRecycle and MassDEP would be very valuable
- Should be working w/ each business/trade associations (e.g., hospitals, colleges), need to develop standards for "green member awards", to avoid "greenwashing".
- Need to recognize small start-up businesses that make recycled content products
- Commercial/multi-family property managers: focus on property managers before tenants.
 - Recycling is a tough sell to this group
 - Need to enforce waste ban compliance to get their attention
 - Haulers cannot convince property managers to recycle
 - Waste ban enforcement against property managers results in tenants provided with recycling opportunities
 - Need to identify who is responsible for hiring haulers and ensuring that recycling services are provided. May be assigned to different types of staff at different properties.

4. EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS

- Work through the existing Secretaries' Advisory Group on Environmental Education ("SAGE", established by Massachusetts EOEEA and Department of Education)
- Break the "How" section into two different boxes
 - one for establishing recycling program
 - one for teaching teachers/students
- Move "Goal" a line above the chart
- Make first row "Audiences" (Students, Teachers, and Superintendents)
- Consider opening MassDEP Municipal Grants to school superintendents

- Under “Teaching Recycling”, add “Teach the Teachers” (teachers in training, and active teachers), professional development days, DOE, summer institutes, college teacher training programs, SAGE’s work on national legislation called “No Child Left Inside”. Need to let teachers know of resources available
- Under “Establish School Recycling Programs”:
 - Establish program for custodian and program for kitchen staff
 - Need SACs – School Assistance Coordinators
 - Encourage the schools to maximize participation in recycling programs – make sure everyone is involved to ensure program longevity despite turnover of one or two lead teachers/custodial staff
 - Extend recycling beyond “paper” and “bottles and cans.” Add kitchen recycling, food waste, and EVERYTHING else that is recyclable.
 - Case studies needed to demonstrate success and positive impacts
 - Create formal “webinars” to tape MassDEP workshops and provide the lessons/workshops for Superintendents, teachers, etc
 - Instate school composting programs – onsite, regional, with neighborhood businesses who can use compost