

Massachusetts Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC)
Meeting to discuss Final 2030 Solid Waste Master Plan and regulatory changes
October 18, 2021, 10:00 am – 12:00 pm

Q: Do the disposal reduction goals in the Solid Waste Master Plan include waste disposed at out-of-state landfills?

A: Yes. Exported tons are included in the calculation.

Q: Were changes made to the allowance for 350,000 tons of new capacity for “innovative and alternative technologies (e.g. gasification or pyrolysis).”

A: This is included in the final plan. Given capacity needs, we felt the need to keep the option open for an improved technology to manage a small portion of material.

Q: Will there be increased enforcement of existing Waste Bans?

A: Yes, and we feel this can be accomplished in a few ways. We did conduct fewer inspections in the last year due to COVID-19 health and safety concerns. We are currently out conducting inspections again. To complement this effort, we feel we can also make better use of information provided to us by third party inspectors, as well as solid waste facility data. In addition, we are sending direct requests for information to companies we believe need to comply with a ban but for whom we don't have any information. We did this with a number of food waste generators and had some success improving compliance.

Q: How do Waste Ban inspectors determine whether mattresses and textiles were clean or dirty when they went in the trash?

A: MassDEP plans on working with mattress generators to determine this information. That language (about the condition of mattresses) came into play with respect to municipalities: these programs may be unable to control the condition of items they receive. So we wanted flexibility in that regard. We'll try to get information from municipalities about how they're handling mattresses and ensure they're being managed properly. If they are being sent for disposal, we want documentation of the basis for sending those mattresses for disposal. If the mattress is coming from a commercial/institutional source (i.e. a hotel), that's different because management of the materials should be tighter there. MassDEP would issue enforcement where there is not clear documentation for why the material was sent for disposal.

Q: Is it known if there is more mattress recycling capacity coming online?

A: We've heard from several recycling companies that are interested in Recycling Business Development grants (RBDG) for mattresses. We think this will become apparent in the next grant cycle. Mattresses are a targeted material (under RBDG) and we anticipate more funding to that sector.

Q: Do solid waste facilities need to submit new Waste Ban plans to include the new Waste Ban materials?

A: We'll soon be posting a new guidance document on this. Those plans need to come in three months before the effective date of the regulatory changes – so, August 1, 2022. If a facility is going through a permit modification before then, we encourage them to revise the Waste Ban plan at that time.

C: Most transfer stations do not have health & safety protocols for handling mattresses. They need information from MassDEP to educate attendants/workers.

R: We can make a point to focus on that.

C: MassDEP needs to encourage interagency recycling collaboration. For instance, MassDOT needs to be at the table, and this directive should come from Cabinet level. We're lagging behind other states in use of materials like glass, compost, recycled tire chips, and asphalt shingles in highway applications.

R: These issues will be reviewed and discussed in the new State Agency Recycling Market Development Council, which will include MassDOT, among others.

C: Towns are struggling to keep paint collection going. We need Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for paint, packaging and mattresses. It would be great to see the Secretary at a meeting supporting EPR. MassDEP should be involved with the Zero Waste Caucus.

C: Franklin County Solid Waste Management District has applied for mattress recycling grants and been rejected because communities are too small. Regional trailers would be helpful for managing mattresses among multiple municipalities.

C: MRFs are not investing in machinery to get materials (glass) to spec because demand is not there. MassDOT needs to advocate for this.

R: Road uses are not only uses for glass - we've seen other projects as well. The hope is for multiple different glass outlets.

Q: Will MRF reporting be enhanced to include glass, trash, and non-marketable plastics that go back to incineration? Will dual stream recycling be promoted for efficiency?

A: We feel we have the capability in existing reporting requirements to ask about amounts of material - marketable vs. non-marketable - coming in and going out. Municipalities could certainly collect dual stream, but the destination would be a single stream MRF. There have been no dual stream facilities proposed in the Northeast over the last 10 years. Brockton is still operating but it was built in the early-90s.