

**Massachusetts Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC)**  
**October 22, 2020, 10:00 am – 12:00 pm**  
**Meeting Summary**

*Note: The meeting presentations are posted on the MassDEP web site along with this meeting summary.*

MassDEP Updates, John Fischer, MassDEP

Q: With respect to the food waste ban - is that one ton down to 1/2 ton per week per facility? And what requirements does the threshold trigger?

A: When talking about a chain with multiple locations, the threshold refers to an individual location. In a campus environment (such as a school or hospital), it applies to all of the food waste generated on that contiguous campus. Businesses are not required to reduce their food waste to zero, but do need to get below the applicable threshold. Businesses can reduce their food waste through any combination of prevention/reduction, donation and food rescue, or diversion (by composting, sending to animal feed or anaerobic digestion) strategies. These strategies generally work best when they are maximized.

Q: Does the proposed 1/2 ton per week threshold apply to schools?

A: Yes. MassDEP has estimated that about 30 individual public schools could potentially generate enough material to be above that threshold (assuming a "normal" school environment with students in school five days a week). We have a number of initiatives in place to support these schools. For public schools, MassDEP has a municipal grant program, as well as the Green Team program. RecyclingWorks in Massachusetts also has provided assistance to both public and private schools.

Q: Is there an organics exemption if an area does not have commercial organics hauling available? We just had a town organics dumpster pulled because the hauler couldn't make the economics work to go that far out. Everything west of Worcester is very rural.

A: These bans apply statewide. MassDEP realizes that the infrastructure varies across the state, however infrastructure is continuing to grow, and our goal is to have comparable infrastructure statewide. We do have the ability to provide a Waste Ban waiver to an entity with no viable option for recycling (not just due to cost), however, we try to keep these limited and temporary in nature. It is also worth noting that, unless that town organics dumpster is from a public school generating more than 1 ton per week now (or 1/2 ton per week under the proposed new ban), it would not be subject to the waste ban.

Q: I understand the concept of the waste bans but I have watched - for 20-plus years - these bans result in businesses popping up that are not managing the materials in an environmentally responsible way. Think e-waste going to China, C&D fines exceeding RCRA limits on metals,

composting sites being mismanaged, etc. How can MassDEP ensure that the end result is not doing more environmental harm than good?

A: MassDEP is certainly aware of the need to oversee facilities that accept waste ban materials, in this case, food materials. We do that via our regional offices, working to ensure compliance. This also relates to proposed regulatory changes to 310 CMR 16 and 19. With respect to composting in particular, RecyclingWorks in Massachusetts runs a technical assistance program to help facilities improve operations before they potentially become subject to enforcement.

Q: Related to the Mattress Waste Ban, how will you differentiate between recyclable and non-recyclable units that recyclers will not take? Is the ban for all mattresses?

A: MassDEP agrees there are cases where mattresses can be contaminated to the point they are not recyclable. MassDEP intends to establish program guidance to provide flexibility for these cases, while still ensuring that mattresses are stored and managed to enable recycling. We welcome input during the public comment process and will continue to speak with mattress recyclers about what they can and cannot process (fabric, metal, wood, etc.)

### **2019 Solid Waste Data – John Fischer, MassDEP**

Q: Are co-digestors located at sewage facilities considered “other” or “anaerobic digestion?”

A: There’s only one such facility, and that total is included under “anaerobic digestion.”

Q: Can you clarify soil disposal? I thought in-state contaminated soil was managed under COMM 97 for reuse only, as daily cover, shaping, capping. If reused, why call it disposal?

A: The disposal numbers do not include material used for cover and capping material – these figures only includes material going for solid waste disposal at landfills.

Q: Is there any place we can get the cover material totals?

A: While not included in this presentation, that information will be available in the 2019 Solid Waste Data Update published to the MassDEP website.

Q: Why would we export 822,000 tons, and then import 306,000 tons?

A: It’s important to note that waste movement between states is not determined by MassDEP, nor by other states. This is a function of price, geography, and business relationships in the waste industry. Whether the facility is located in-state or out of state is immaterial in that sense. This has been the industry standard for many years.

Q: To what do you attribute the five percent decrease in MSW (210,000 tons from 2018 to 2019)?

A: We never know for sure, but MassDEP has been working hard across a number of program areas to reduce disposal. Individual municipalities have made significant reductions in trash via Pay-As-You-Throw and our different grant programs. Businesses have achieved waste reduction through RecyclingWorks assistance. We see continued progress in food waste reduction, etc. It could also be light-weighting of packaging. We expect this reduction is due to some combination of these, as well as other factors.

Comment: Covanta SEMASS - Rochester MA capacity is over-stated at 1,250,000 TPY. The long-term proven throughput of the facility is 1,050,000 TPY. The DEP numbers are overstated by 200,000 TPY.

A: MassDEP will follow up with Covanta on this capacity projection.

Q: Does landfill capacity include ash? Is ash counted as disposal, even though it's already been counted in combustion tons?

A: The landfill capacity projections refer to capacity for solid waste disposal. The projections also reflect the fact that some available capacity is being used for ash (Bourne, for instance). The full 2019 Solid Waste Data Update does have a chart that shows how much ash is being generated, where it's going and what beneficial use comes from it (metals, etc.) Ash disposal is not counted as part of this solid waste disposal data.

### **Recycling Works in Massachusetts and Green Team Program Updates, Lorenzo Macaluso, CET**

Q: Is all of that recycling (tonnage derived from RecyclingWorks technical assistance) actually getting recycled, given the recycling market crash?

A: We have an intake process when we work with a business or institution that involves quantifying the anticipated tonnage impact. Our level of confidence comes from successfully connecting that entity with a service provider. While we don't "follow the truck," we assume that connection is functioning as intended.

Q: In relation to the proposed regulations, is Recycling Works going to be 'point' on textiles and mattress diversion?

A: For mattresses and textiles, the residential and municipal programs and assistance will be delivered by MassDEP. RecyclingWorks will handle technical assistance for businesses and institutions. MassDEP also will continue to conduct outreach across all of these areas.