

**Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC) Source Reduction Meeting Summary**  
**January 19, 2019 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM**  
**MassDEP, One Winter Street, Boston, MA**

**MassDEP Source Reduction Initiatives**

John Fischer provided an introductory presentation to begin the meeting. This presentation is posted along with this meeting summary on the SWAC web page. The group then engaged in extensive discussion of source reduction initiatives and ideas. This discussion is summarized by major topic area below.

*Framing the word “reduction”*

Q: What is the difference between “source reduction” and just “reduction”? Is the word “source” necessary, since we are referring to all types of reduction? In terms of framing, we should get rid of the word “source.”

A: Source is a waste industry-driven term. It refers to waste that can be reduced at the “source” as opposed to waste that can be diverted through recycling or composting. While sometimes the terms slip—“waste reduction” can include ALL ways to decrease disposal—today we are talking about source reduction specifically.

C: The 2030 Master Plan is a new opportunity to talk about reducing waste overall, not just recycling. Extended producer responsibility plays nicely with this. The Master Plan is a huge public education opportunity.

C: We need to be rigorous about what we put forward about reduction. It’s a big change, but people are ready for it. We have the opportunity now to get the framework and semantics right.

*Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)*

C: MassRecycle would like to see MassDEP do more with EPR and producer take-backs. MassRecycle is happy to offer expertise and talk about different models.

Q: How is Pay As You Throw a source reduction, rather than recycling, initiative?

A: PAYT has many effects on behavior. It drives recycling and composting, but there is also documentation that it influences consumer behavior. People look for products with less packaging that will have to get thrown out (can’t be recycled/composted) or more durable products, since they ultimately will have to pay for that disposal. This is just one part of PAYT.

C: PAYT is a good policy, but it works best in a framework of other initiatives that enable source reduction, e.g. having PAYT and a Library of Things. PAYT creates awareness which can affect consumer behavior.

Q: Does MassDEP support a bag or barrel based PAYT?

A: MassDEP supports both. Barrels are easier for haulers, so MassDEP accepts 35 gallon containers and provides grants for municipalities to buy these carts. On the other hand, bag programs are a lot easier to enforce and can be less expensive.

C: Cardboard manufacturer responsibility should go into the Plan, to further contribute to a closed loop system. The manufacturers should pay for people to send packaging back to them. Packaging responsibility should drive producers to think more about their packaging, which could drive source reduction.

C: Some examples of zero-waste packing available now are reusable shipping containers and Amazon lockers.

C: There is an interesting difference between packaging needs for e-commerce vs. retail sale. For retail, packaging is designed to be large enough for an advertising display. But for e-commerce, you aren't looking to influence people's preferences because they have already purchased, which could be an opportunity to reduce packaging.

### *Electronic Waste Disposal*

C: Electronic waste is a huge issue for municipalities. Most residents have no idea what to do with e-waste; people want more than two days a year to dispose of their electronics.

C: The Conservation Law Foundation has been looking into EPR and supports it. Rep. Hecht is filing an EPR bill for electronics. Hearing from municipalities really drives policy. EPR should work alongside mandatory recycling. Producers could pay a fee if their packaging is not recyclable.

### *Right to Repair*

C: MassPIRG is working with Rep. Cronin to file a right to repair bill. This concept needs to be included in the source reduction conversation. There is a lot of data suggesting that if people could repair their expensive electronics, they would.

C: Paint EPR legislation is going to be re-filed as well.

C: Right to repair laws force the producer to share all schematics of how a product works. While this may be too complicated for the average person to understand, it could drive small repair businesses.

### *The Sharing Economy*

C: Oregon and Minnesota have done studies to assess how much reuse is happening and to quantify the sharing economy. While this is a lot harder to quantify than recycling or composting, MassDEP hopes to conduct a study to address it.

C: There is a baseline for some reuse activity. We have to figure out what baseline activities are occurring and what opportunities are available. We also need to ask what could MassDEP do to influence that? At the very least, MassDEP could put together examples of the sharing economy

C: The best way is to lead by example and purchase clothing at thrift stores. We need to destigmatize that.

Q: Has MassDEP looked into measuring or examining the impact of Craigslist, Freecycle, and more recently Buy Nothing Facebook groups and NextDoor.com, both of which have a presence in many cities?

A: Some of that impact may be difficult to quantify, due to the nature of the transactions (with Craigslist, for example, the transactions don't take place on the site, but rather in a private e-mail exchange). But it's an intriguing possibility.

### *Food Services Reuse Opportunities*

C: What can MassDEP do to address plastic cups, plates, take-out containers, etc.? One company offered people to bring their own plates to their cafe, but local health code ultimately prohibited that. Is there a way for us to modify health codes to permit this?

C: Another example is a re-filling cup model in Germany known as "Re-Cup."

### *Textile Reuse*

C: The state could ban textile disposal to drive a change in behavior for people to start donating clothing instead of throwing it out.

C: Textile recycling at the Springfield Salvation Army is down 50% in 2018. This may have occurred due to competing outlets for donation in Western Massachusetts.

C: It is possible that a portion of the “leak” in western Massachusetts textile donation is that some retailers do take back clothing. H&M is one example of this.

C: Natick collects “Simple Recycling” pink bags from residents for donation and textile harvesting.

### *Commercial Waste Reduction*

Q: All of this commercial waste tracking is great, but how can organizations use the case studies to help them?

A: These tools (i.e. Leanpath) can be used to identify the biggest causes of food waste and make food service operations more efficient. This has mostly been used by college and universities, less so with supermarkets.

C: There are a lot more prepared foods within supermarkets, it would be great to expand this model to them.

### *C&D Reuse Opportunities*

C: Portland, OR passed an ordinance that older buildings have to be deconstructed and cannot be demolished. This helps slow down developers who want to see neighborhoods shifting from all old buildings to new ones. Deconstruction also takes longer than demolition. The city also created a certification for deconstruction, which opened up a whole new market.

C: One leverage point for C&D is LEED criteria. Another possibility is to use municipal building permits to drive change.

### *Contracting*

Q: How engaged is the state in reuse contracting?

A: There has already been a lot done at a procurement level in Massachusetts, but we can also consider adding product categories to our contract list. One example is that the state of Connecticut has a contract for a furniture refinisher for schools. We should have a vendor on contract so schools, hospitals, prisons, etc. could easily purchase refurbished furniture.

C: Often perfectly good furniture and equipment is thrown out, but there is a good opportunity to extend product lifespan and get good furniture back into reuse. The reasons for throwing out furniture are not compelling (e.g., corporate offices & hotel remodeling).

Q: How can we incentivize contractors to use refurbished materials or LEED certifications for customized housing? Also is it possible to fast-track the process for buildings to get permits to open in an already established building?

A: We haven't thought about that from a materials perspective, but it would be interesting to use the "greenfield" model for materials.

### *Resource Management Contracting*

Q: Could you explain resource management contracting further? How does that conversation play out with haulers, and what cost savings are there?

A: Resource contracting can be really powerful, but it doesn't work for everyone. Since there is a fixed cost, it generally works better for larger facilities and at scale, as opposed to small or mid-sized businesses. Scale makes the investment worthwhile. MassDEP has contract templates on its website. Companies must work with their hauler to set goals and make the hauler a partner with the business' efforts to reduce waste. Ideally these contracts should be for a decent amount of time and need a certain scale given the fixed cost.

C: The City of Haverhill shares the cost of recycling with the hauler, which incentivizes the haulers to bring materials to MRFs that pay more, which lowers the cost for everyone.

C: LEED used to be focused on how much you can recycle; now the focus is on diversion and avoidance is counted just as much as recycling.

### *Hauler Contracting*

Q: Will the state discuss pricing structures up the stream?

A: MASSDEP doesn't control pricing, but we have been doing some training and guidance around municipal contracting practices. Last week, MassDEP had meetings across the state to discuss how municipalities can arm themselves with the right questions to ask the vendors. You have to be a smart consumer and be educated with the questions to ask to negotiate the best price for your community. Some take-aways: longer contracts are better; anticipate change, be transparent, and use the public bidding process to your benefit.