

**Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC) Meeting Summary**  
**January 24, 2019 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM**  
**MassDEP, One Winter Street, Boston, MA**

**MassDEP Updates**

John Fischer of MassDEP provided several MassDEP updates:

- MassDEP will be holding several Solid Waste Advisory Committee meetings in the next couple of months. These include:
  - Source Reduction Meeting – this will be scheduled for late February
  - Organics Subcommittee Meeting – this will be scheduled in March
  - C&D Subcommittee – The next meeting is scheduled for March 14, 2019.
- RecyclingWorks in Massachusetts has completed an annual update on the number of entities receiving separate food waste collection. This number increased from 1,350 customers in 2014 to 2,300 customers in 2018, a 70 increase. For more information, see the RecyclingWorks [blog post](#).
- Municipal Solid Waste and Recycling Surveys are due on February 1, 2019. Note that this survey submittal is different than Solid Waste Facility Annual Reports.
- The next Sustainable Materials Recovery Program Municipal Grant Application is scheduled to be posted in early April, with applications due in mid-June.
- The application for Recycling IQ Kit grants is currently open.

**E-Commerce Packaging: Planning for Policy Shifts**

**Kyla Fisher, AMERIPEN**

Kyla Fisher of AMERIPEN gave a presentation on E-Commerce Packaging. For more information, please see the presentation posted with this meeting summary.

Q: I recently observed a cushioning product from a meal kit company in a curbside recycling bin. It had a very large “1” the logo around it indicating it should be recycled, but I don't believe any MRFs want it. Why aren't e-commerce companies listening to MRFs and government entities regarding what types of packaging can or cannot be recycled?

A: This tension has always existed within the e-commerce industry. AMERIPEN has been trying to push data to different stakeholder groups about what is technically recyclable vs. what the market permits, particularly with respect to National Sword. We need to make sure products that are labeled as recyclable can be recycled.

C: Another issue for difficult to recycle materials is the accessibility (or lack thereof) of outlets, and how much consumers are willing to go through to reach these outlets.

C: Economics is the challenge: at some point it needs to be cost effective to set up systems for sending packaging back to companies (i.e. meal kits). We also need to promote it.

C: For the Master Plan, we are looking 10 years and beyond. It's important to observe evolving waste stream trends, since the 2030 waste stream will look very different than our waste stream today. Although there are some tradeoffs with recyclability, overall, lightweighting reduces tonnage that ultimately goes for disposal.

C: As an industry, we are moving more towards multi-material packaging, which is not recyclable in the current system. But the inclusion of that material results in other advantages such as light-weighting. If the composition of a ton of recyclables is evolving due to light-weighting, do we need to set different disposal goals that are not based on weight? Are there different incentives we can provide? Also, a lot of new initiatives have contributed to reducing food waste. We need to find a balance between closed loop recycling and finding other uses for these products. For instance, Nova Scotia counts thermal recovery as a form of recycling.

C: On the disposal end, we're observing failures of the current recycling system. Newer packaging is more complicated to recycle, so it might accelerate the trend towards disposal.

R: For e-commerce, producers design packaging for product protection, not just recovery. Producers want to make sure they are not wasting product, but most packagers are interested in also figuring out how to make their packaging recoverable.

Q: How does AMERIPEN see e-commerce fitting into EPR strategies?

A: Right now, EPR makes the producers pay, but AMERIPEN is looking beyond that. We want to consider how a fulfillment retailer, like Amazon, for instance, fits into this.

C: The United States should invest more in research and development, like the EU.

Q: To what extent have you investigated demand for recycled packaging?

A: The entire industry recognizes the demand, and we are working on recycled content goals. There will likely be more upcoming recycled content legislation, but there should also be a balance and caution to maintain free trade. We need to look at how clean the stream is and if it would merit a recycled content mandate. We need to be wary that big companies could get all the recyclable material, and little ones could get penalized for not meeting the recycled content requirements.

Q: What do you think of Amazon lockers? Is this going to change packaging?

A: AMERIPEN hosts salon events to engage stakeholders and turn ideas into policies. Lockers may be an opportunity for reusable packaging or at least returnable packaging. This is ripe for innovation, but we haven't reached a perfect solution yet.

C: Does AMERIPEN have a position on product stewardship?

A: AMERIPEN does not have an official position. We look at each bill as it comes through and look for unintended consequences. We are very cautious of EPR at the state level, since 50 different policies would be very burdensome.

### **Mattress Recycling Updates**

**Lydia Meintel-Wade, MassDEP**

Lydia Meintel-Wade gave an update on mattress recycling in Massachusetts. For more information, please see the presentation posted with this meeting summary.

C: In addition to the stakeholders listed, the environmental community is also a stakeholder.

Q: What is the value stream like for mattress recycling? What are the margins, and is there room for growth? Is it heavily subsidized, or is it sustainable on its own?

A: A lot of the back-end materials do not have high value. Steel and foam, however, are high value and have readily accessible outlets. Unfortunately, the resale dollar value is not generally enough to cover the cost of the process, which is why the mattress recyclers also charge a processing fee. Also, the Recycling Dividend Program grant will let a business buy equipment to make their process more efficient, which can drive up the back-end cost.

C: Massrecycle, SWANA and Environmental Business Council NE will host a free EPR summit on February 28<sup>th</sup>. The Mattress Recycling Council will be there. Anyone interested can sign up at [sneswana.org](http://sneswana.org).

Q: Would this same infrastructure work for furniture, such as couches and cushioned chairs?

A: Furniture other than mattresses is trickier, but there is potential. One mattress recycler does accept padded furniture. Furniture materials are even more diverse than mattresses, and some of the wood inside furniture is particle board, which has no recycling value.

### **MassDEP Market Development Programs:**

#### **Recycling Loan Fund & Recycling Business Development Grants**

**Sean Sylver and Josh Cook, MassDEP**

Sean Sylver and Josh Cook of MassDEP provided updates on MassDEP's Recycling Loan Fund and Recycling Business Development Grant programs. For more information, please see the presentations posted with this meeting summary.

Q: Can an entity apply for the Recycling Business Development Grant and Recycling Loan Fund?

A: Yes, but the amounts awarded cannot cover more than the total project cost.

C: Potential future target material suggestions include cartons, paper cups, and tires.