



# **Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection**

## **Solid Waste Master Plan**

### **2025 Program and Policy Assessment**

In the 2030 Solid Waste Master Plan, MassDEP committed to work with the Solid Waste Advisory Committee to prepare a mid-course program and policy assessment. This assessment reports on progress on implementing the programs and policies identified in the 2030 Master Plan and evaluates whether additional measures are needed to advance implementation of the 2030 Master Plan to make greater progress towards our waste reduction goals.

MassDEP held 17 stakeholder meetings during 2025 to obtain input for this assessment, including meetings of the Solid Waste Advisory Committee, Construction and Demolition Materials Subcommittee, Hazardous Household Products Workgroup, Organics Subcommittee, Reduce & Reuse Working Group, and the Recycling Market Development Workgroup. MassDEP will continue to update the Construction and Demolition Materials, Organics, Reduce & Reuse, and Market Development Action Plans as needed. Additionally, MassDEP established a new Action Plan for Hazardous Household Products in 2025.

## **Overall Goals – Status and Progress**

The overall disposal reduction goal in the 2030 Master Plan is to reduce total disposal from 5.7 million tons per year in 2018 to 4.0 million tons by 2030, a 30 percent reduction. As of 2024, total disposal increased by 560,000 tons (10%) from 2018. Within this amount, disposal of municipal solid waste (MSW) (typical household and business waste) remained essentially flat during this period, dropping by 10,000 tons from 2018 to 2024. Therefore,

this increase was entirely due to the disposal of non-MSW, primarily construction and demolition debris (C&D) materials.

**Table 1 - Solid Waste Disposal Trends:** This table shows the change in solid waste disposal from 2018 to 2024.

|                            | <b>2018 Tons</b> | <b>2024 Tons</b> | <b>% Change</b> |
|----------------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Municipal Solid Waste      | 4,510,000        | 4,500,000        | 0%              |
| Non-Municipal Solid Waste  | 1,140,000        | 1,710,000        | 50%             |
| Total Solid Waste Disposal | 5,600,000        | 6,220,000        | 10%             |

This increase in non-MSW disposal corresponds with economic growth in Massachusetts during this timeframe, as gross domestic product by state increased by 40% from 2018 to 2024<sup>1</sup>. Massachusetts’ population also increased during this same period, however this change does not correlate as closely with waste disposal, as population increased at a nominal rate.

In the 2030 Master Plan, MassDEP also established a goal to reduce the toxicity of the solid waste stream. In 2025, MassDEP worked through our Solid Waste Advisory Committee and a sub-group focused on hazardous household products (HHP) management to prepare a new Action Plan for HHP.

In 2018, 78% of households had access to at least one household hazardous waste collection event per year. As of 2024, that percentage had increased to 82% of households. While that progress is positive, access to more frequent collection events for higher volume materials such as paint, automotive fluids and mercury containing products is inconsistent and limited. The HHP Action Plan focuses on increasing residents’ access to collection opportunities, including a new grant offering to support privately operated collection centers. The Action Plan also emphasizes expanded support for municipal programs, including distribution of equipment for safely collecting intact and damaged or defective lithium-ion batteries and other universal wastes.

## Legislative Matters

### Major Actions and Progress

MassDEP has increased engagement with the Legislature on waste and recycling issues, including communication with key committees, legislative leaders, and staff to inform

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<sup>1</sup> Accessed from BEA website 8/27/2025 - <https://apps.bea.gov/regional/histdata/releases/0325gdpstate/SAGDP.zip>

development of proposed legislation related to solid waste reduction. In 2025, MassDEP chaired a legislatively mandated Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Commission that was charged with developing EPR recommendations and supporting information for paint, mattresses, batteries, electronics, and plastics and packaging. The Commission's final report and recommendations were submitted to the Legislature in January 2026.

On June 24, 2025, Governor Healey filed the Mass Ready Act to strengthen and protect Massachusetts communities. With this legislation, Massachusetts is putting a downpayment on a more secure and sustainable future. The bill proposes \$28 million to support solid waste and recycling programs for residents and municipalities, directly supporting the goals of the 2030 Master Plan.

This authorization would support continuation of MassDEP's work in solid waste and recycling by supporting comprehensive public awareness campaigns and educational materials, municipal food waste diversion programs, and grants for household hazardous waste collection projects to name a few initiatives. The Mass Ready Act is currently under review by the Legislature.

## 2026-2030 Priorities

Looking ahead to the next five years, passage of the Mass Ready Act would enable MassDEP to continue to support innovative waste reduction technologies, promote programs that reduce our reliance on disposal, and assist Massachusetts communities in expanding local waste reduction and recycling efforts. MassDEP also stands ready to offer support to the legislature as it considers the recommendations contained in the Extended Producer Responsibility Commission Report that was issued in January 2026.

## Waste Disposal Bans

### Major Actions and Progress

MassDEP implemented new waste bans for mattresses and textiles and expanded the food waste disposal ban effective November 1, 2022. Following the bans, textile recovery increased 17% (7,000 tons) from 2022 to 2024 among surveyed organizations. Mattress recycling and reuse more than doubled from 170,000 to 400,000 units during this same period. Significant progress in reducing food waste was also achieved, as discussed further in the Organics section.

MassDEP's waste ban inspections in recent years have varied due to COVID and temporary staffing shortfalls. However, MassDEP is now on track to exceed the Master Plan target of 200 inspections per year in 2026 due to the addition of two new inspectors in late 2025.

Even with the addition of new waste ban materials in 2022 (meaning more materials are banned from disposal), MassDEP inspectors are now observing slightly less banned materials in trash loads.

## 2026-2030 Priorities

MassDEP will continue to enforce existing waste bans and explore opportunities to further divert materials from disposal, conserving our limited disposal capacity and resulting in other co-benefits. For instance, MassDEP is currently working with the Organics Subcommittee to develop an updated Organics Action Plan, including potential expansion of the food waste disposal ban. MassDEP is also expanding outreach and compliance assistance efforts to raise awareness of existing waste disposal bans. This includes continued use of targeted, formal “request for information letters” to raise waste ban awareness among businesses, while learning more about the status of businesses’ waste ban compliance. MassDEP is also working with business associations, local health departments, and other organizations to publicize the waste bans and provide free assistance to businesses through MassDEP’s RecyclingWorks in Massachusetts program to improve compliance. MassDEP will continue to share information about waste bans through the Recycle Smart MA recycling outreach program and municipal partners.

## Source Reduction and Reuse

### Major Actions and Progress

MassDEP published our first Reduce & Reuse Action Plan in 2021. Priorities in this area have included building materials, textiles, and single-use food service ware/packaging. MassDEP increased funding for [Reduce and Reuse Micro Grants](#) and has awarded 95 grants totaling over \$500,000 through this program. The [Recycling and Reuse Business Development Grants](#) program has been expanded to include reuse, and MassDEP awarded five grants totaling \$400,000 to support reuse operations. In 2020, MassDEP worked with Tufts University to publish an [economic and spatial analysis of the Massachusetts’ Reuse Economy](#), showing that it represents about 2 percent (6,438) of total businesses and employs about 1 percent (32,828) of the Commonwealth’s total workforce. The report also found that the reuse sector in Massachusetts creates \$7.3 billion in economic activity.

Building deconstruction is an alternative approach to building demolition that maximizes the reuse potential of building materials. MassDEP established a Deconstruction Workgroup and held a Deconstruction Workshop in fall 2025 to bring together a diverse group of stakeholders to help develop and implement program recommendations to support building materials reuse and building deconstruction practices. MassDEP also

worked with state and local public health officials and other key stakeholders through the RecyclingWorks in Massachusetts program to develop best management practice guidance for reusable service-ware in takeout food service.

## 2026-2030 Priorities

In consultation with stakeholders, MassDEP has identified the following priority issues:

- Strategic outreach and financial assistance to foster reduce and reuse opportunities and infrastructure
- Promote and expand building deconstruction efforts and recovery of valuable, durable items for reuse
- Work with regional and statewide networks to spread the adoption of successful reduction and reuse practices, such as supporting the transition to reusable food service-ware in place of single use disposables.

MassDEP will continue to focus on growing Massachusetts' infrastructure and market for building materials reuse with an emphasis on addressing the structural needs to sustain these operations. Priorities will be expanded to include household durable/bulky goods, as well as business and institutional furniture and fixtures. MassDEP will continue to engage with the Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance (DCAMM) and the Embodied Carbon Intergovernmental Coordinating Council to foster increased reuse and reduced disposal of building materials in state construction and renovation projects.

## Organics Waste Reduction

### Major Actions and Progress

The Master Plan's food waste reduction goal is to achieve 780,000 tons of food waste reduction annually by 2030. Massachusetts diverted 370,000 tons of food waste from disposal in 2024, which is still 410,000 tons shy of the 2030 goal. Waste characterization data shows that an estimated 930,000 tons of food materials are still disposed of in the trash each year.

MassDEP implemented a reduced commercial organics waste ban threshold of one-half ton per week in November 2022, roughly doubling the number of entities subject to the ban. The number of Massachusetts businesses and institutions separating food waste increased from 2,310 in 2018 to 4,150 in 2024.

In 2025, MassDEP published an updated food waste economic benefits study that showed continued economic benefits from reducing food waste disposal, including:

- Supporting nearly 1,700 jobs and \$143 million in labor income
- Generating \$194 million in economic value
- Generating a total of \$390 million in economic activity

In addition to issuing enforcement for violations of the food waste disposal ban, MassDEP worked to increase awareness and compliance by sending formal “request for information letters” to more than 167 companies covering more than 1,025 locations. So far, 83 responses have been received:

- 51 companies reported being over the ½ ton per week threshold. Nine of these established a food waste collection program after receiving this notice and all 51 now have programs in place.
- 22 reported being under the threshold, though five of these were establishing programs.
- 10 have submitted partial responses and MassDEP is requesting additional information.

Since 2020, MassDEP has supported organics business development by awarding three Recycling Loan Fund loans totaling \$1.425 million and 20 Recycling Business Development Grants totaling \$1.4 million to support food donation, food waste collection, and food waste processing.

One hundred and sixty municipalities now report some type of municipally supported residential food waste collection program. MassDEP supported this program growth and has awarded \$1.1 million in grant funding to establish or expand municipal food waste programs since 2020. From 2021 to 2024, municipalities participating in MassDEP’s Recycling Dividends Program invested \$865,000 of those grant funds on municipal food waste reduction programs.

## 2026-2030 Priorities

In 2026, MassDEP will continue stakeholder discussions to develop a proposed approach for a potential expanded food waste disposal ban as part of an updated Organics Action Plan. These stakeholder meetings will address critical issues before proceeding with any proposed expanded disposal ban, including infrastructure and capacity development, as well as guidance and assistance to municipalities and major food business sectors. MassDEP will continue to focus grant and loan funding on infrastructure for food waste collection and processing. MassDEP will also foster cost-effective and socially beneficial solutions by broadening the adoption of food waste prevention and food rescue strategies at businesses and institutions.

# Residential Waste Reduction

## Major Actions and Progress

MassDEP invested in municipal recycling, composting, and waste reduction programs, awarding nearly \$29.7 million in grant funding since 2020 through the Sustainable Materials Recovery Program. This includes more than \$22 million in funding through the Recycling Dividends Program, which provides municipalities with grant payments based on implementing defined activities in priority program areas. Municipalities then use this funding to reinvest in program implementation.

MassDEP continued to work with municipalities, recycling facilities, and other stakeholders to provide guidance about how to recycle properly in Massachusetts through the Recycle Smart MA program. This program helps reduce contamination in our recycling stream, making the recycling system more efficient and cost-effective. MassDEP's Municipal Assistance Coordinators (MACs) worked closely with municipalities to help implement and expand waste reduction initiatives at the local level. MACs provided targeted assistance through workgroups on recycling and solid waste contracting, Pay As You Throw program implementation, and waste reduction programs in schools.

## 2026-2030 Priorities

Over the next five years, MassDEP will continue to invest in expanded municipal infrastructure for waste reduction, recycling and composting, with a particular emphasis on residential food waste and bulky items such as furniture. Another area of emphasis is increasing awareness of the Recycle Smart MA program to ensure that more residents and businesses are accessing information they need to recycle right.

# Construction and Demolition Materials Reduction

## Major Actions and Progress

Massachusetts' goal for construction and demolition (C&D) materials was to reduce disposal by 260,000 tons annually by 2030 from a 2018 baseline. However, actual disposal has increased by 280,000 tons as of 2024, indicating a lack of progress in increasing diversion of C&D materials from solid waste disposal. Although growth in Massachusetts' gross domestic product during this timeframe likely played a role in increasing C&D waste generation, additional actions are needed to address this waste stream. The C&D Action Plan takes a four-pronged approach to work towards the 2030 goal:

- Improve Jobsite Waste Management
- Enhance Collection & Processing
- Develop End Markets
- Promote State Inter-agency Cooperation to Advance “Leading by Example”

MassDEP has implemented the Minimum Performance Standard approach to waste ban compliance at C&D handling facilities to ensure a level playing field and consistent separation of waste ban materials. Initially set at 15 percent, the Standard has since increased to 20 percent, and MassDEP has established a schedule for progressively increasing this standard to 25 percent by 2030.

Simultaneously, MassDEP is focused on improving reuse and separation of materials from construction job sites, as well as other bulky items such as commercial and residential furniture and fixtures. MassDEP established a Deconstruction Working Group in Fall 2025 and held a Deconstruction Workshop to bring together diverse stakeholders to develop strategies to advance deconstruction practices in Massachusetts. MassDEP is working with the Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance, as well as other state agencies, to advance deconstruction and jobsite source separation in state construction and renovation projects. MassDEP is working closely with the Embodied Carbon Intergovernmental Coordinating Council on state agency initiatives to capture the value of existing buildings and reduce the disposal of building materials and fixtures.

MassDEP has awarded grants and loans to support our C&D disposal reduction goal, including:

- 15 grants for the reuse of building materials and furniture through the Reduce, Reuse, Repair Micro Grants Program
- Five RBDG grants for \$550,000
- One Recycling Loan Fund loan for \$500,000

## 2026-2030 Priorities

C&D priorities for the next five years include continuing to implement the Minimum Performance Standard waste ban compliance approach at C&D handling facilities to ensure effective separation and diversion from disposal of waste ban materials. MassDEP will support additional progress by identifying and fostering expanded markets for C&D materials, with particular emphasis on painted and treated wood, gypsum wallboard, and asphalt shingles. Development and grant programs will support and invest in this market growth.

MassDEP will work to increase the implementation of deconstruction best practices in state and private construction projects to advance the deconstruction and building materials reuse infrastructure in Massachusetts.

## Market Development

### Major Actions and Progress

Establishing a Recycling Market Development Action Plan was a focus of the 2030 Solid Waste Master Plan. MassDEP convened a Recycling Market Development Workgroup which supported the publication of the Recycling Market Development Action Plan in 2024.

MassDEP implemented a major component of this Action Plan in 2025, launching the new Waste Reduction Innovations Grant program. This program is intended to address recycling and waste reduction market growth opportunities that did not fit within existing grant programs, with a focus on new innovative processes to advance material recovery.

MassDEP also published a Recycling Business Assistance Guide in 2024 to help make recycling and waste reduction businesses aware of state resources to support their growth. MassDEP also published a white paper on solar panel reuse and recycling in 2023.

MassDEP continued to support market development growth, awarding 13 loans totaling \$3.8 million through the [Recycling Loan Fund](#) and 56 [Recycling and Reuse Business Development](#) (RBDG) grants totaling \$5.5 million since 2020.

### 2026-2030 Priorities

MassDEP will continue to invest in waste reduction infrastructure through the Recycling Loan Fund, Recycling & Reuse Business Development Grants and Waste Reduction Innovation Grants. These investments will focus on target materials, including food waste, textiles, glass, bulky plastics and household goods, C&D materials, and single use food service ware. In 2026, MassDEP will look to initiate development of an incubator and accelerator program to help early stage and innovative waste reduction business ventures grow successfully.

MassDEP will expand partnerships with other state agencies to support recycled product purchasing and waste reduction businesses, helping their growth through leveraging state resources. MassDEP will partner with the Operational Services Division to fund recycled product purchases and testing programs for state and local governments. MassDEP will work with the Massachusetts Facility Management Association, the University of Massachusetts Transportation Center, the Department of Transportation and other state

agencies to increase purchasing of recycled content products in transportation and facility maintenance applications. This work will focus on shingles, glass, and compost.

## Solid Waste Facility Oversight and Capacity Management

MassDEP continued to ensure solid waste facility compliance through ongoing permitting and compliance and enforcement activities. This included continued monitoring of closed landfills with a specific effort to identify and require testing for polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) at landfills suspected to pose a potential threat to surface or ground water.

MassDEP has conducted a comprehensive review of the state's solid waste regulations and plans to issue draft regulations for public comment in 2026.

### 2026-2030 Priorities

MassDEP's priorities in this area include promulgating comprehensive revisions to the solid waste management regulations consisting primarily of updates and clarifications to better align the regulations with the current waste management system. This will include some changes to siting requirements, landfill post closure plans, and PFAS sampling requirements for all landfill environmental monitoring programs in Massachusetts. In 2026, MassDEP will also accept written stakeholder comments on a proposal to establish limits on carbon dioxide emissions from municipal waste combustion facilities under the 310 CMR 7.74: *Reducing CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions from Electricity Generating Facilities*.

## Conclusion

Since the publication of the 2030 Solid Waste Master Plan, municipal solid waste disposal has remained flat despite significant economic growth, while disposal of construction and demolition debris has increased by 50 percent. Food waste still makes up the largest fraction of municipal solid waste (22%) and will continue to be a primary target for additional diversion.

The growth of construction and demolition debris disposal emphasizes the need to focus additional efforts on deconstruction and source separation at the job site. There continues to be a need to expand and improve our waste reduction and recycling infrastructure. Going forward MassDEP will continue efforts to support the Commonwealth's waste

reduction and recycling industry through policies, regulations, education, and technical and financial assistance programs.

Overall, MassDEP has implemented important regulatory and policy changes, established new Action Plans for hazardous household products and recycling market development, established a new Waste Reduction Innovations Grant to drive new recycling market opportunities, and expanded other municipal and business grant opportunities. The Department is excited about the potential that these foundational program and policy initiatives hold for continued progress over the next five years.