

Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP)
Recycling Market Development Workgroup
January 13, 2022, 10:00 am to 12:00 noon
Kickoff Meeting

Q: Are plastics included in what MassDEP refers to as the construction and demolition (C&D) waste stream? Plastics in the form of flooring, windows, roofing, fencing, decking, etc. end up in the C&D waste stream.

A: The waste characterization data which categorizes a number of distinct plastic materials in Municipal Solid Waste, including certain C&D materials found in MSW, is available here - <https://www.mass.gov/guides/solid-waste-master-plan#waste-characterization-&-capacity-studies> There is separate data on C&D waste here: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/2007-massachusetts-cd-debris-industry-study-0/download>

C: Vinyl flooring should be considered to be C&D. One is a definition based on origin of generation, the other is by material, but “plastics” traditionally mean containers.

Q: Will there be any consideration into taking Category 3 waste (also referred to as bulky waste) out of the formula as it relates to the Minimum Performance Standard at C&D recycling facilities?

A: For background, MassDEP has set a Minimum Performance Standard of 15 percent separation of materials for Construction and Demolition facilities. Category 3 is considered “bulky waste.” There has been some concern that the bulky waste stream is of lower quality than the rest of the C&D stream. We believe, with the 15 percent standard, it is appropriate to include bulky loads along with other C&D. However, we have commissioned a study about the composition of these bulky loads to learn about the amount of recoverable material in those loads. That study will be conducted this spring and MassDEP will take that data into account going forward.

C: With small efforts on construction sites, a lot of C&D waste can be site separated to a much higher percentage than the market has gotten used to. While the mandated low percentage is a great start, it seems that additional innovation is needed.

C: The City of Boston has started a deconstruction initiative in order to reduce C&D. This is part of the City’s Zero Waste plan.

C: I’m interested in what other communities are doing to reduce Construction and Demolition debris. It turns out our city (Newton) doesn't actually count C & D waste on its waste monitoring dashboard, so it certainly hasn't been prioritized. We have a lot of development and demolition going on. I'm interested what other towns have been doing on that.

Q: How are you defining "disposal?" Does MassDEP follow the EPA hierarchy?

A: “Disposal” is any material sent to a solid waste landfill or municipal waste combustor, in-state or out-of-state.

Q: Will the state Market Development Council (different group from this one) only consist of state personnel? It might be helpful to have some additional stakeholders.

A: The Market Development Council will consist of state agency representatives but there has been talk of inviting external stakeholders to those meetings to lend some outside perspectives.

Q: Does MassDEP plan to work with schools to educate children?

A: MassDEP's Green Team program focuses on recycling education and programs in schools. See <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/recycling-composting-for-kids-teachers-schools> for more information.

Q: Are non-profits eligible for grants such as the Boston Building Resources Re-Use Center, which collects and sells kitchen cabinets, and other household building materials in West Roxbury? <https://www.bostonbuildingresources.com/reuse-center>

A: Non-profits are eligible for funding through the Recycling Loan Fund and Recycling and Reuse Business Development Grant (for specific material categories).

Q: Are any other items being considered for a Waste Ban before the 2040 Master Plan process begins?

A: The one that is currently on MassDEP’s radar is potentially further lowering the threshold of the food Waste Ban. That is one item we plan to review at the midway point for the Solid Waste Master Plan in 2025. We haven’t identified any others in the short term, but as we continue with these workgroups, there may be others. A Waste Ban is a minimum two-year process and perhaps even three or four years. MassDEP is also studying emerging waste streams such as decommissioned solar panels.

Q: The toxin mercury can be found in every fluorescent light bulb, but I did not hear any mention of MassDEP recycling programs to capture these types of bulbs. Are you planning on having programs for fluorescent bulbs?

A: This is addressed outside of the Solid Waste Master Plan. You can learn more about those programs here: <https://www.mass.gov/guides/massdep-mercury-information>

C: MassDEP helped fund a series of studies years ago that looked at how Workforce Development Professionals in the state and the recycling industry can work together. NERC and EBC participated, among others. http://www.skill-works.org/documents/SW_RecyclingReport3-2012_online.pdf

Also:

<http://www.skillworks.org/ui/inc/documents/SkillWorksRecyclingTaskForceRecommendationsFinalMay2013.pdf>

C: Here's a link to a good survey of Market Development efforts over the years done by Betsy Dorn. It includes state programs, non-profits, local programs past and present, as well as discussion about RMD in general:

<https://circular-matters.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Dorn-for-NERC-Recycling-Market-Development.pdf>

Q: Will specific information on current recycling markets and businesses be presented at some point?

A: Yes. We can present in-state data and information on out-of-state programs. There also may be businesses that can serve as case studies for specific materials or sectors.

C: Is anyone in Massachusetts using robots in sorting solid waste that are being developed by this company? <https://www.amprobotics.com>

C: I would suggest breaking groups down by subject and having a moderator. No more than 10-12 per group, so everyone can feel comfortable with input. Everyone comes in with different backgrounds and skillsets. How can we get some good synergy? Maybe MassDEP can collect this information from participants and then assign participants to the various particular interests we can contribute toward.

R: 10-12 per group might be tough because we would need a lot of moderators to manage that many small groups. But breaking the groups down to some degree may be helpful. The latter comment also makes sense. One of the next steps MassDEP can take is a survey on interests and priorities and consider that as a basis for 1) what we should be talking about in general and 2) breaking out into groups of common interest.

C: You also do it with the Recycling Partnership, with Recycling Leaders calls.

C: Brownfields get left for the State to clean up. Wind turbines have a 15-25 year life – if someone bails on the project, it's left for the Government to clean up. In Wisconsin, there are laws before you get a project approved. Does Massachusetts meet with other states to talk about these issues?

R: We do that on an ongoing basis through the Northeast Recycling Council (NERC) and Northeast Waste Management Officials Association (NEWMOA). We are looking forward to sharing information on other state market development programs at future meetings.

C: We need to do something about online retail packaging.

C: As someone who has worked for a dismantling firm – sometimes really dangerous sites don't get addressed in time due to bureaucracy and they wind up costing more money.

C: The state can leverage public/private partnerships, as seen with the organics Waste Ban, and harvest ideas from the business community to see what works best.

Q: How can we safely dispose of lamp oil? At Goodwill Industries of the Berkshires and Southern Vermont, we get many donations of lamps which have oil in them. Are there places we can bring them in Western Mass?

A: One outlet is NEDT in Westfield. They may accept this oil. <https://www.nedt.org/> Give RecyclingWorks in Massachusetts a call/email: 888-254-5525 info@recyclingworksma.com

C: NERC would love to have all government entities and schools consider becoming Government Recycling Demand Champions. Here's a link to information: <https://nerc.org/projects/government-recycling-demand-champions>

C: The U.S. Composting Council would like to support the development of compost use specifications. Here are some resources: <https://www.compostingcouncil.org/page/HowUseCompost>

C: NERC will be hosting, in partnership with NEWMOA, a webinar on markets for finished compost: Feb. 23, 1. Register here: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/8245067692714994704>

Q: Might trash bags be added to the EPP program?

A: OSD requires 10 percent post-consumer recycled content for trash bags in the Environmentally Preferable Cleaning Products contract. Green Seal is exploring adding a new third-party certification for trash bags, which will allow us to require that certification.

Q: What does OSD consider a big success so far?

A: We have so many products on the contracts – we're trying to push for vendors/manufacturers to label things properly so if you're looking for a product, it's easy to understand if it has post-consumer recycled content or some type of third-party certification. The buyers need to know what they're buying. That's one piece we're working on.

C: How about compostable cafeteria food trays? Millions of trays are used per day statewide.

C: What about compostable bags and other compostable items? It would be great to see the BPI logo on the list of third-party certifiers.

Q: What about compostable items that are grease/water resistant and coated in PFAS? Regrettable substitution.

A: BPI certified compostables don't contain PFAS. BPI revised their certification to include testing for PFAS; phasing out use of PFAS coating on compostable food service items. This is important to the composting industry to build end markets.

C: For clarification, that BPI certification allows up to 100ppm total fluorine. That's a good start, but not PFAS-free. [https://www.bpiworld.org/Fluorinated-Chemicals-\(PFAS\)](https://www.bpiworld.org/Fluorinated-Chemicals-(PFAS))

C: Here is the link to MassDevelopment and the state "One Stop" program for more information <https://www.massdevelopment.com> and <https://www.mass.gov/guides/community-one-stop-for-growth>

Q: Does the work opportunity tax credit apply to the formerly incarcerated?

A: Yes, it does. There is a list of criteria: disabled, long-term unemployed, veteran – there are at least a half-dozen groups this can apply to.

Q: Will DEP also look at safety issues for staff to handle recycled materials?

A: Worker health and safety is not MassDEP's focus, however this is certainly an important factor in considering the value of jobs created by recycling and other industries.

Q: Does the DEP do cost/benefit analysis on its ban policies?

A: MassDEP prepares information on costs and benefits of regulations, which is included within the background document when draft regulations are issued for public comment.

Q: What exactly differs from the function of this group from all the progress NERC has done?

A: This group is focused specifically on Massachusetts and on providing MassDEP with input on developing a Recycling Market Development Action Plan. NERC's programs and initiatives are focused on a regional basis. NERC will present at our second workgroup meeting.