

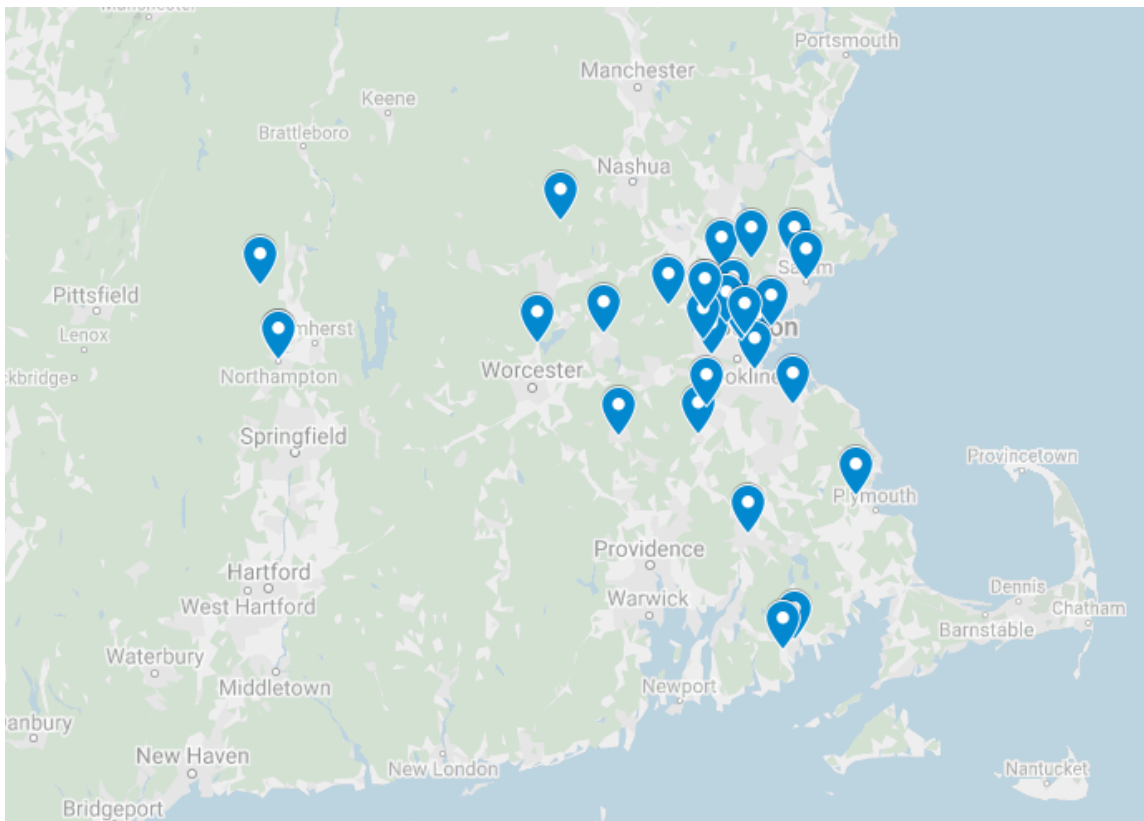
# MASSDEP REDUCE & REUSE (R&R) WORKGROUP

## SUMMARY OF KICK-OFF MEETING SURVEY RESPONSES

MassDEP hosted the kickoff meeting for the Reduce & Reuse workgroup in February 2020.

Prior to this meeting, a survey was sent out to get a better pulse on priorities, expertise, and interests of workgroup participants. 36 participants responded to this survey. Note: Responses have been compiled and grouped based on similar themes. Responses that were focused on recycling were not included as they are outside of the scope of this workgroup.

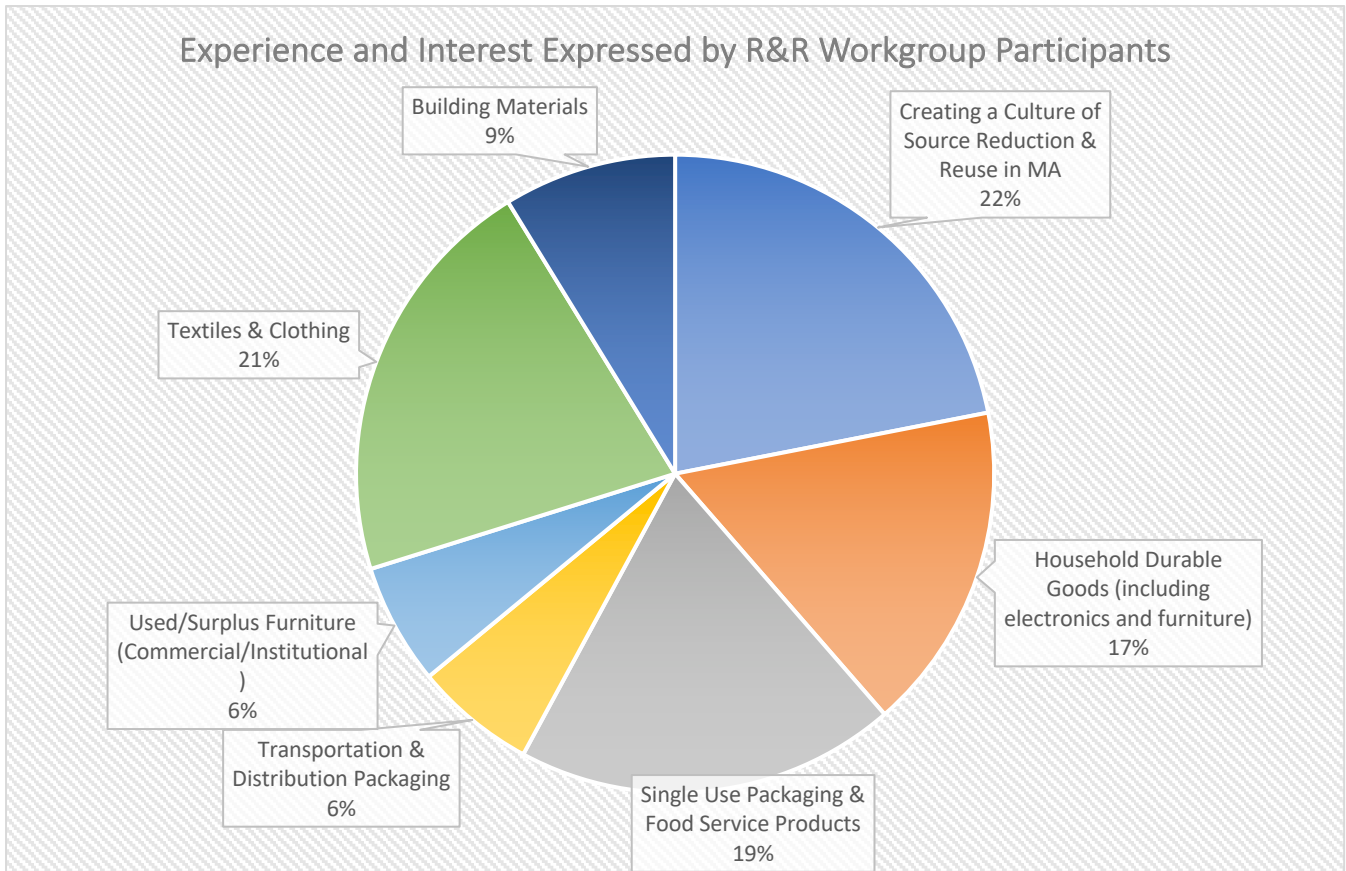
### GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF WORKGROUP PARTICIPANTS \*



\*as of kick-off meeting held in February 2020

\*\*not mapped are the two stakeholders (from Fixit Clinic and National Stewardship Action Council) who are based in CA but committed to promoting source reduction and reuse here in MA

### WHICH ASPECTS OF SOURCE REDUCTION/REUSE DO YOU HAVE EXPERIENCE WITH OR ARE MOST INTERESTED IN?



NOTE: The pie chart above represents the results of pre-populated response options. There was an option to express other experience/interest related to source reduction and reuse. Here are what respondents wrote in:

- Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) – *multiple respondents wrote about EPR/holding producers responsible*
- Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) – Smarter Sorting Model
- Beverage Containers
- Shared Economy
- Connecting the donor with the non-profit or for-profit group to keep use of materials for highest purpose
- Sporting goods/equipment, toys, student supplies/needs
- Reuse events (repair, toy/garden exchanges, etc.)

## WHAT ARE THE TOPICS YOU HOPE TO ADDRESS AS PART OF THIS SOURCE REDUCTION & REUSE PLANNING EFFORT?

### STRATEGIES MENTIONED:

- Planning for EPR legislation (HHW, carpet, and packaging) – *Note: the importance of promoting EPR and product stewardship was mentioned several times*
- Municipal Support:
  - Promoting community reuse events
  - Expanding MassDEP grant options to encourage municipalities to incorporate waste reduction and reuse
  - Sharing examples of successful source reduction and reuse programs to inspire municipalities/districts to start programs
- Supporting local/regional reuse opportunities:
  - Hiring reuse coordinators in 3-5 locations around the state to help foster and incentivize communication between reuse organizations
  - Build a list of organizations who are looking for household goods (and what they will take) so we can pass on more items to others who can use them
  - Connecting people to reuse/reduce/repair resources
  - Support non-profits and their volunteers to continue their work in the reuse and repair sector
- Support and incentivize reuse/reduce for businesses, institutions, and K-12 schools
  - Develop school programs on Reduce/Reuse/Repair/Share
  - Engage residents on Reduce/Reuse/Repair/Share (public faced educational program)
  - Encouraging vendors to use durable pallets, less shrink wrap, etc.
  - Incentivizing producers to help move away from single use products
  - Expanding R&R education, collection, infrastructure, and collaboration with corporate residents
  - Reinforce / reinvigorate libraries as core institutions of community and civilization
- Textile Disposal Ban
- Expanding fixit clinic and repair cafes around the state
- Promoting repair beyond personally-owned items (i.e. repair and maintain shared public property/community assets)
- Mandating durability through institutional procurement processes, e.g. corporate, government, university RFPs and RFQs adding language along the lines of: "Preference will be given to vendors who provide service manuals, repair parts and diagnostic tools." (Also creates local skilled and semi-skilled jobs.)

### DISCUSSION TOPICS:

- Repair
- Digital inclusion, equity and literacy
- Product Stewardship/ Extended Producer Responsibility
- Economic justice
- Product durability
- Circular economy – How do we transition to a circular economy where almost everything we consume is designed, built, serviced, and maintained in a local service area using locally available tools, materials, processes, and services, and kept at its highest utility for as long as possible?

- Create a culture of Reduce & Reuse – How do we catalyze a wholesale change in the consumer mindset around consumption / materialism? Understanding the true impact of the way we practice consumption currently: the financial impact on ourselves of choosing poorly manufactured and designed goods, and the subsequent impact on the planet of the premature loss of utility of those goods. (Repair as “Better than New”.)
- How to make Massachusetts a national/global leader in source reduction and reuse
- How to create a reuse/recycling infrastructure for used closed and textiles
- Moving away from wasteful single use products - promoting durable/ quality products through the lens of resource conservation and environmental impacts

## MATERIALS MENTIONED:

- Clothing/Textiles
- Household Durable Goods
- Ink Cartridges
- Plastic Bags
- Coffee Cups
- Single Use Items
- Electronics
- Building materials

WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE MAJOR CHALLENGES, BARRIERS, OR OBSTACLES TO SOURCE REDUCTION & REUSE IN MA?

## FINANCIAL AND STRUCTURAL BARRIERS:

- Lack of support and advocacy from local and state governments for source reduction and reuse
- Lack of resources/funding opportunities for municipalities/businesses/institutions and non-profits to get started
- Some of the key stakeholders for reduction and reuse (like manufacturers and procurement officers), are different than those we usually engage with in the waste industry
- Recycling and trash collection are prioritized over R&R both financially in terms of staffing – lack of municipal staff bandwidth to focus on R&R
- Reuse sector-based capacity challenges:
  - Transportation of items between people who want to dispose of an item and people who could use them
  - Lack of funding and capacity for marketing, training, and storage
- Infrastructure and market gaps in the R&R sector – i.e. to better facilitate giving and taking
- Corporate opposition to source reduction, reuse, and repair
- Economic viability of source reduction/reuse/repair operations
- Economic burden that falls on the municipality/residents to handle end-of-life costs of handling items such as products

## CULTURAL BARRIERS:

- Lack of knowledge/education (*this was mentioned several times*)
- The language we use to discuss "trash" and items we no longer want
- The perception/belief that source reduction & reuse is more time-consuming, inconvenient, or more costly

- Cheap consumer products (both cost and quality) that are designed for disposal rather than repair and upgrade
  - That we're not paying the full cost of the item when we acquire it (There are numerous upstream and downstream costs that are not factored into the purchase price we pay)
- Lack of buy-in to importance of R&R (could be within a business, institution, municipality, or at the resident/consumer level)
- Access to accurate disposal information – many people are unclear what can and cannot be recycled and frustrated/not sure what to do with items that cannot be recycled
- People consider recycling as enough, but they don't understand there's more to environmental issues besides recycling
- Ease (or lack thereof) of access to reuse facilities and other responsible disposal options
  - People/businesses don't know who to contact. When they talk to one retail reuse site they hear the word "No" and get a bad feeling about reuse. It may be that they are trying to bring too many items at one time and the reuse organization does not have the capacity to store, items need small repairs, etc.
- Lack of knowledge/transparency on what happens to our discarded, donated or recycled items – makes it difficult to make better choices as a consumer
- Misleading product labels/ green-washing that keep people from taking further action to reduce waste or reuse/repair items they already own
- Lack of understanding/empowerment at individual level that people can vote with their money
- The cultural perception that new is better than used or repaired and that it's "free" to throw things away.

## OPPORTUNITIES:

- Nudges to incentivize reduce/reuse (i.e. 10 cent charge on takeout bags) – *this idea of using a market-based nudges to discourage single use items was mentioned several times*
- Share available/viable business models that offer reuse/repair services
- Collaborate with corporate residents on reduce/reuse/repair – encourage companies to make packaging recyclable or reusable
- Policies that make producers responsible for the waste that they create (*mentioned several times, including specifically calling out need for EPR for electronics*)

## WHAT ROLE FOR YOU SEE YOUR ORGANIZATION (OR YOURSELF) PLAYING TO SUPPORT SOURCE REDUCTION AND REUSE IN MA?

*Responses varied widely based on the organizations. Many responses hit on similar themes and have been consolidated/summarized as to not identify specific organizations or individuals.*

- Providing examples of and advocating/lobbying for legislation in MA
- Assistance with developing policy and creating educational outreach programs for residents
- Brainstorming ideas for the R&R Action Plan
- Implementing or piloting reduce/reuse programs and policies and sharing out best practices
- Education and information sharing
- Holding regional meetings with reuse organizations
- Organizing and hosting community reuse and repair events
- Operating reuse organizations/services

- Incorporating zero waste practices into business model (i.e. offering household cleaning and personal care items from bulk bins or encouraging BYOC (bring your own containers))

## IN YOUR OPINION, WHAT ACTIONS CAN MASSDEP TAKE TO FURTHER PROMOTE SOURCE REDUCTION AND REUSE IN MA?

*\*It should be noted that while MassDEP will take into account all of these suggestions, the department does not make any commitment to implementing any of these suggestions at this time. Some of these ideas may be outside of the scope of the department's regulatory authority and resource capacity. The final Reduce & Reuse Action Plan informed by this workgroup will lay out the strategies the department will take to promote source reduction & reuse.*

### LEGISLATIVE:

- Work with legislators and Governor Baker to get leadership across the state to take on the big battles related to source reduction and reuse
- Tax single use plastics - coffee cups - as Berkeley, CA, San Fran, and Palo Alto are doing
- Support the Extended Producer Responsibility bills for packaging

### CONTINUE/EXPAND FUNDING:

- Continue offering grants to incentivize communities and consider expanding the reach of the grants
- Continue to give RDP money to communities to focus on reuse.
- For the RDP program, munis should be able to earn multiple points for R&R programming
- Expand micro-grant programs
- More financial support for businesses/organizations in this space

### FACILITATE THE SHARING OF INFORMATION/EDUCATION:

- There are some communities implementing reduce/reuse programs effectively. We should be hearing more about how they're doing it (i.e. highlighting zero waste efforts such as the Buy Nothing Facebook groups).
- Case studies of successful swap shops/sheds as well as library of things and tool library and repair events, quantify savings/enviro impacts, grants to reuse organizations, effective promotions
- Build awareness of reuse options, provide implementation guides, seed/grant money
- Clarify and publicize MA Board of Health laws regarding the option to bring your own containers or refills
- Produce PSAs that educate general public about practical ways to reduce/reuse
- A general educational campaign similar to Recycle Smart MA focused on reduce/reuse– *this idea was mentioned several times*
- Coordinate with building superintendents
- Helping to create/support outlets and educating the public on these opportunities

### BUILDING A REDUCE/REUSE NETWORK:

- Continue to try and bring us together frequently; help establish an online network or pool of items and resources.

- Keep a DEP person in Boston focusing on Reuse. Foster regular communication of the groups that are doing reuse.

#### TEXTILES:

- Provide funding for collection and processing equipment to support the proposed MassDEP textile waste disposal ban
- Work with the Massachusetts legislature to create a textile collection/reuse licensor's program that protects the operators as well as keeping the operators accountable to the goals of the state's proposed textile disposal ban
- Focus more on educating residents, and retailers on the benefits of reclaiming unwanted textiles

#### OTHER:

- Work with DPH to expand the universe of reusable containers consumers can use at supermarkets, and to make it easier to do event recycling and composting, and review other DPH rules that result in massive use of disposables
- Encouraging durability through institutional procurement processes, e.g. corporate, government, university RFPs and RFQs adding language along the lines of: "Preference will be given to vendors who provide service manuals, repair parts and diagnostic tools." (Also creates local skilled and semi-skilled jobs.)
- Provide additional ways for responsible disposal of items that are not recyclable (ie: plastic bags, ink cartridges)
- Expand pickup / distribution of materials to be reused