

2018 Legislative Changes to Vermont Solid Waste & Bottle Bill Laws

Senate Bill S.260 and S.285 (combined changes from S.285 and S.287) were passed into law at the end of May 2018 which made changes to Vermont's Universal Recycling law and Beverage Container Redemption law.

Mandated Recyclables requirements

- Solid waste facilities are now able to charge a separate fee for collection of recyclables.
- Haulers (including "fast trash" haulers) are not able to charge a separate fee for collection of recyclables but can charge a bundled fee that covers both trash and recycling costs. Fast trash haulers can turn away customers that seek only recycling services without bringing in any trash. This has been an existing requirement and did not change.

Leaf and Yard Waste requirements

- Solid waste facilities and "fast trash" haulers must accept leaf and yard waste only from April 1 – December 15 (instead of year-round). Note that fast trash is now required to collect the same Universal Recycling materials as a transfer station, including mandated recyclables, leaf and yard debris and food scraps.
- Haulers are no longer required to offer collection of leaf and yard waste.

Food Waste requirements

- Solid Waste Facilities that offer trash collection and "fast trash" haulers must accept food residuals.
- Haulers will not be required to offer collection of food residuals until July 1, 2020. Please note the Universal Recycling Stakeholders will be discussing this requirement over the summer and ANR will report to the legislature in January, 2019.
- Food waste is banned from disposal in trash and landfills on July 1, 2020 (this requirement remains unchanged other than a minor change to clarify that starting July 1, 2020 all generators must divert food scraps regardless of distance).

Landfill Disposal Ban requirements

- The Agency of Natural Resources Secretary can issue a waiver allowing mixed paper disposal if insufficient markets exist; this provision expires July 1, 2019. (S.260)
- Landfills have the option of accepting residuals from a materials recycling facility (MRF) in an area without an approved SWIP if the landfill “receiving the waste has a plan approved by the Secretary to remove mandated recyclables from the process residuals to the maximum extent practicable.”

ANR Reporting Responsibilities

ANR will include in its biennial solid waste report information on:

- The hauler requirement to collect food scraps (after meeting with the Universal Recycling Stakeholders group), including:
 - The possibility of amending the requirement for haulers to offer to collect food scraps only in municipalities, solid waste management districts, or other areas based on population, housing or route density.
 - Evaluating the capacity to process all food scraps regionally.
- Beverage redemption exemptions for retailers near certified redemption centers.

Bottle Bill changes

- Beginning October 1, 2019, unclaimed bottle bill deposit fees (escheats) will be collected and remitted to the Department of Taxes, to be deposited into the Clean Water Fund.
- Retailers are no longer required to be within five miles of a certified redemption center in order to obtain an exemption from redeeming containers, but still need written approval from ANR to not accept containers for the brands they sell.

Mercury Auto Switch changes

- Vermont’s Mercury Auto Switch program was extended from a December 31, 2017 end date to a December 31, 2021 end date, to match an industry program extension.