

State of Vermont  
Department of Environmental Conservation  
Waste Management & Prevention Division  
1 National Life Drive – Davis 1  
Montpelier, VT 05620-3704

## Universal Recycling Stakeholders Group Minutes – August 7, 2018, 1-3pm

### Group Members Present:

Kim Crosby	Casella Waste Systems
Cathleen Gent	Central VT Solid Waste Mgmt. District
Bruce Westcott	Central VT Solid Waste Mgmt. District
Jen Holliday	Chittenden Solid Waste District
Michele Morris	Chittenden Solid Waste District
Jen Duggan	Conservation Law Foundation
Elena Mihaly	Conservation Law Foundation
Kyle Lanzit	Grow Compost
Susan Alexander	Lamoille Regional Solid Waste Mgmt. District
Paul Tomasi	Northeast Kingdom Solid Waste Mgmt. District
Tess Kennedy	Shouldice & Associates
Izaak Herman	Toxics Action Center

### By phone

Josh Estey	Chittenden Solid Waste District
Jeanine McCrumb	Chittenden Solid Waste District
Cheryl Franklin	Franklin Rubbish Removal
Ham Gillett	Greater Upper Valley Solid Waste District
Heather Shouldice	Shouldice & Associates
Pam Clapp	Solid Waste Alliance Communities
Mary O'Brien	Southern Windsor Windham Counties Solid Waste Mgmt. District
Trevor Mance	TAM Waste Mgmt.

### ANR Staff Present:

Rebecca Ellis	DEC Deputy Commissioner
Cathy Jamieson	Solid Waste Program Manager
Mia Roethlein	Solid Waste Program
Josh Kelly	Solid Waste Program
Rebecca Webber	Solid Waste Program

### Minutes

#### Welcome and Introductions – Cathy Jamieson, DEC

(1:00 – 1:10)

- 1:00pm – Group reviewed meeting ground rules and approved them. Universal Recycling Stakeholders ground rules included:
  - Everyone has a chance to speak and participate
  - Limit comment to 1-2 minutes
  - Focus comment on the topic that is being discussed
  - Be constructive, respectful and polite
  - Use specific examples
  - Speak up

- 1:05pm – Cathy outlined the purpose of the meeting, which centered on the legislative mandate to continue meeting with stakeholders to have conversations about the provision for food scrap collection by haulers and regional capacity to process organics statewide. ANR is looking for stakeholder feedback on the results of the food scrap hauling survey on how to capture the essence of data that has been collected for the report back to legislature.

### Summary of Results of Food Scrap Hauling Survey

(1:10 – 1:40)

- Josh reviewed results of survey about food scrap hauling conducted in July (see PPT presentation)
- Cathleen Gent asked whether there was only one response per organization? Josh Kelly confirmed that only one response was included from each company/organization. She also asked about whether data from the 3 “others” included in the graphs. Josh noted that a graph didn’t include “others” because they were so few that it didn’t add much information.
- Bruce Westcott expressed disappointment that the analysis didn’t specify which SWMEs responded, since they are very different. He also was of the opinion that ANR needs to listen to the haulers that would have to offer organics collection curbside. He suggested going back to licensing and see what counties they serve, or go back to the haulers and find out how many customers they have and where. He thinks the legislature is going to want to know who responded as well as their size and the communities they serve, and that results should include a graphic display (map or similar) that shows where the answers come from and whose view they represent.
- Paul Tomasi asked if there were any graphs that compared all responses together? Josh Kelly replied that while no comparison graph had been created, it could be done in future analysis. Jen Holliday thinks it would be interesting to see graphics stacked, so that you see different groups’ answers together. Paul noted that if he was a legislator, and ANR presented these charts, he would wonder what they were trying to tell him; the hauler response is clear, but what can legislature conclude based on this?
- Jen Holliday asked if ANR will make a recommendation based on this data? Rebecca Ellis responded that it wasn’t clear yet exactly what ANR would be reporting to the legislature.
- The group discussed the idea that the piece that’s missing for providing information to the legislature is the customers’ view. Kim Crosby noted that UVM had done a survey of Vermonters on human behavior and willingness to pay, and said she thought that data was more important for this discussion than density. Michele Morris asked about data that SWMEs had collected through their SWIP surveys. Susan Alexander noted that those surveys aren’t statistically valid.
- Bruce Westcott said that the people he’s trying to get input from are the 30% of Vermonters who are urban and can’t compost at home and wondered if there was a way to reach out to municipal bodies in dense areas to hear about their perspective as customers.
- Cathy Jamieson noted that even in dense areas, some do compost, and wondered how many customers will pay for service, and whether Vermont should let market forces prevail or should mandate action? She reminded the group that they had been having this conversation, and there were many different opinions, which means that the data reflects that conversation pretty well. ANR is definitely still digesting and analyzing this data.
- Michele Morris stated that with the landfill ban, everyone will have to divert, so the customer is the voice that’s missing (commercial, multi-family, single). Haulers are saying “don’t make us do this” and SWMEs are saying “we need options”; what do the customers want?
- Jen Holliday said that the argument is that removing hauling mandate doesn’t mean they won’t have services – there’s a need for input from customers, but we don’t know what will happen until 2020, either way.
- Bruce Westcott suggested that ANR should be doing follow-up to see why so many didn’t respond. Cathy Jamieson responded that everyone had an opportunity, and ANR can’t make people respond to a survey.
- Cathleen Gent remarked that this seemed like an incomplete picture even without considering customers – what are other organizations, municipalities, housing organizations perspectives? Without them, this doesn’t tell the whole story, even though the UR Stakeholders opinions are reflected in this data. She thought that more could happen to paint the picture and to help ANR think about recommendations. Cathy Jamieson responded that this data had just begun to be analyzed, and that ANR could consider bandwidth for getting more responses.

### Guidance on Disposal Ban Information for Haulers

(1:40 – 2:15)

- Josh Kelly shared the guidance document on disposal bans and haulers and discussed expectations for haulers related to disposal bans, that they inform their customers and offer recycling services, and introduced the “oops” tag option. He acknowledged that ANR knows it is hard for haulers to have that conversation because they don’t want to lose customers, but the UR law is trying to get people moving in the same direction.

- He notes that nobody is expected to open up trash bags, but if a hauler is picking up from a customer and there's a bunch of cardboard in the dumpster, that's one of the best indicators. Or, if they have no recycling bin—yes, some large businesses are backhauling, but if a hauler is just picking up trash, especially from a commercial customer, that's a red flag. He discussed ANR's responsibilities, and current outreach efforts for voluntary compliance with businesses, reaching out to specific businesses in an area. The outreach team (EcoAmericorps member, Program staff and SWME would work together) has visited 100 businesses, about half of them have needed help. If haulers have ideas of places to prioritize, let ANR know.
- Mia Roethlein noted that some businesses were not recycling at all, and after the outreach visits have reached out to their hauler and have gotten recycling set up. Many others were just recycling cardboard, nothing else. About ¼ were supposed to be diverting food scraps (some have come into compliance).
- One of the things ANR heard from haulers when doing transfer station spot checks was that ANR needed to be going to businesses directly, so ANR has focused on doing that. ANR can pursue compliance with the customer if a violation is egregious and "knowing" disposal seems clear.
- Cathy Jamieson clarified that haulers who offer MSW collection must offer recycling. ANR enforcement of that is complaint driven. When recycling became mandatory, the Solid Waste Program had more than 50 hauler complaints, contacted each hauler, and let them know that they needed to respond and demonstrate compliance by providing documentation (tip slips showing they were managing recyclables). Some examples of "knowing disposal" by haulers – putting a TV set out by the trash in with MSW, or mixing source separated recyclables with MSW. ANR acknowledges that it's hard to report on peers/competitors—the program will accept anonymous complaints, but complainant need to be sure to provide enough information to follow up on. Cathy emphasized that the program follows up on each and every complaint.
- Kim Crosby pointed out that from the hauler's perspective, there's a difference between offer and provide. Some haulers may "offer", but not provide services. Josh Kelly noted that transfer stations can now charge for recyclables separately, to counteract people who were paying for just trash curbside and taking recyclables to drop-off. But, the law requires a combined fee for both trash and recyclables by haulers—haulers can't charge separately for recycling. ANR can send haulers reminders of this. Josh Kelly noted that some haulers who are not actually providing services have been referred to ANR by other haulers (because they're undercutting competition this way).
- Comments on hauler handout: Michele Morris said that this needs to be "de-jargonized" Rebecca Ellis asked if Michele would go through and offer edits, and Michele agreed that she could. Jeanine also agreed that the document was very confusing.
- Bruce Westcott suggested that ANR needed to consider the audience and keep it simple with something like "what you must do" and "what you cannot do" – focus on what haulers need to know.
- Jen Holliday suggested that haulers want to understand what "knowingly" means. Kim Crosby agreed, asking if banned items are found in the trash, but are contaminated by that, and the load still needs to be thrown away, does that count as "knowing disposal". ANR staff suggested that haulers should use the "smell test"—if you're not sure, then you probably are knowingly disposing, and acknowledged that curbside versus roll-off collection are very different, and it's much easier with roll-off for generator and hauler to see recyclables or other disposal ban items.
- Michele asked about SWMEs role if haulers in their area aren't following the law. Josh Kelly said that sometimes SWMEs refer haulers to them. Mia noted that SWMEs can contact haulers directly, but that ANR can't require SWME to do that. Jen Holliday said that this was an area where SWMEs have had to push back, that local government shouldn't enforce state laws.
- Jen Holliday asked how many people are using "oops stickers"—that she's heard good and bad, and that she thinks it's important to educate customers about what they mean, before haulers start haphazardly using them. A form letter before roll-out is a good idea. And, hopefully, haulers are consistently not picking up loads with recyclables, as that's the only thing that will change generator behavior.
- Kim Crosby suggested that there needed to be some way to direct generators what to do with a banned item, rather than just having haulers leave it behind.
- ANR staff reminded stakeholders of the [Vermont Waste Not Guide](#) which explains what to do with banned items.
- Jen Holliday noted that ANR's landfill ban poster included some things that aren't banned.

## Next Steps

(2:50-3:00pm)

- **Biennial Solid Waste Report** – ANR will be drafting and post for public comment the Biennial Solid Waste Report in the Fall, with a summary of stakeholder meetings including the hauler survey results and ANR's recommendations.
  - **Next Meeting** – Regional organics processing capacity
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- Josh Kelly handed out a map of proposed regions for examining food scrap processing capacity in Vermont and explained that this map was roughly based on counties divided up by travel corridors, and was just proposed regions for now, with likely production estimates and capacity analyses to be added for the report to legislature.
- Jen Holliday asked about whether ANR had food shed data. Josh responded that this current proposed map tried to show corridors and lump some regions, but on a very macro level. Jen suggested that if the group looks at the towns that facilities are currently serving, that could help draw a visual around their service area.
- Susan Alexander asked whether chicken feeding will be part of the calculations. Josh responded that it would be for the larger chicken feed operations, but ANR would likely need to update their existing data, just as with compost operations.

**Meeting Adjourned**

**(3:00pm)**