



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 – November 8, 2018, 1-3pm

Group Members Present:

Kim Crosby	Casella Waste Systems
Craig Goodenough	Goodenough Rubbish Removal
Heather Shouldice	Shouldice & Associates
Tom Kennedy	Greater Upper Valley & So. Windsor/Windham County Solid Waste Mgmt. Districts
Lisa Ransom	Grow Compost
John Leddy	Northwest Solid Waste District
Shaina Kasper	Toxics Action Center
Jen Holliday	Chittenden Solid Waste District
Cathleen Gent	Central VT Solid Waste Mgmt. District
Charles Smith	Full Circle Environmental
Sam Hurt	VT Public Interest Research Group
Teri Kuczynski	Addison County Solid Waste Management District
Frank Stanley	Myers Container Service
Jeff Myers	Myers Container Service
Christine Beling	US EPA

By phone

Shannon Choquette	Northeast Kingdom Solid Waste Mgmt. District
Pam Clapp	Solid Waste Alliance Communities
Ted Siegler	DSM Environmental Services
Natalie Starr	DSM Environmental Services
Natasha Duarte	Composting Association of Vermont
Michael Batcher	Bennington County Solid Waste Alliance
Mary O'Brien	Southern Windsor Windham County SWMD
Ham Gillett	Greater Upper Valley Solid Waste District
John Leddy	Northwest Solid Waste Mgmt. District
Meredith Niles	University of Vermont

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

Welcome and Introductions – Cathy Jamieson, DEC

(1:00 – 1:05)

Biennial Solid Waste Report–

(1:05 – 1:55)

Please send any comments to Becky Webber via email by November 15th.

Josh gave an overview what is included in the Biennial Report and explained that the report includes the Agency's recommendation regarding the hauler food scrap collection requirement.

The Agency recommends the Legislature amend the Universal Recycling law to only require haulers to offer collection of food scraps to their commercial customers and multi-residential (4 or more units) customers, unless they can demonstrate another hauler is providing such collection services in that area.

This amendment would:

- a. Exempt all haulers from collecting of food scraps from single family residents and multi-residential units of less than 4 units.
- b. Allow the market to work by exempting haulers from offering collection of food scraps from commercial customers (such as businesses) or multi-residential (4 or more units) when they can show that another hauler is collecting in that area. This provides a business opportunity for those haulers that want to pick up food scraps.
- c. Simplifies the existing hauler exemption process for food scrap collection which currently requires an amendment by a SWME to their Solid Waste Implementation Plan (SWIP)
- d. Haulers can also subcontract collection services (as allowed under current law).
- e. Assures food scrap collection services will be provided to businesses and larger multi-residential units that produce the most food waste and who would have the most difficulty composting onsite or self-hauling to nearby drop-off locations.

Craig Goodenough commented that in Brattleboro, four or more units is the cut off for municipal residential curb side service versus private subscription service for commercial customers.

Shaina Kasper doesn't understand the rationale for changing the law. It seems as though the Agency asked the haulers and they said they didn't want to do it so the Agency is rolling back the requirement based on that opinion.

Craig stated that from the hauler perspective, cost is important—His company is losing money on hauling organics already.

Cathy Jamieson: We were required to get input from all stakeholders and provide a recommendation. Cathy offered that what she is hearing is that we didn't support or explain the Agency's recommendations well enough. Shaina agreed with this.

Meredith Niles asked about whether we referenced the UVM study that she led.

Josh Kelly: We referred to the UVM study in the draft report's Food Scrap Processing Capacity section. We didn't necessarily refer to the UVM study when we discussed the Agency's recommendation for the food scrap hauling requirement, but we can add more explanation.

Jeff Myers thinks that the ban should stay in effect for 2020, but thinks that haulers should be exempt from any residential collection.

He also stated that a hauler is not going to get clean compost out of a 4 units or more rental unit. He is having problems now with recyclables from rental units being contaminated.

Often it is cheaper to put it into the trash than pay the contamination fee at the MRF.

He thinks this might backfire and scare people out of doing it.

Cathleen Gent stated that the Legislature did ask about density and though it is in the survey, it was not reflected in the recommendations.

Could the Agency consider recommendations for incentives that could help municipalities institute collection programs at different density levels?

Does VT have infrastructure to support people not currently composting? (convenient local drop-offs, capacity at compost facilities and farms)

Natasha Duarte inquired how requirements would work in terms of showing that haulers are offering food scrap collection service.

What happens if haulers go out of business? Is another hauler than responsible for offering it?

Josh responded that it will be complaint-based like it currently is right now with whether or not haulers offer residential recycling. If the hauler offering food scrap collection goes out of business, then please let the Agency know.

Cathy: There are some potential options for how these requirements could be implemented. It is not totally ironed out yet because these recommendations still have to go to the Legislature. The Agency is aware of who hauls food scraps so will be able to confirm that service is being offered.

In addition, our staff are doing outreach to generators which we intend to continue.

Jen Holliday commented that the following statement might be unique to Chittenden County. Many commercial accounts may generate trash and recyclables, but not a lot of food scraps so maybe it doesn't make sense for haulers to be required to offer food scraps to commercial customers.

The three largest haulers in Chittenden County do offer food scraps for large food scrap generators and multi-residential units so the Agency's recommendation might bring in commercial accounts that don't make a lot of sense right now.

The bigger issue is how this impacts all statewide- the Agency can mandate haulers to offer food scrap collection service, but what will happen is that haulers who don't want to offer service will give customers unaffordable pricing. The hope is that this mandate would offer convenient service, but if a hauler doesn't want to do it, then they won't do it.

CSWD would prefer to see what happens with the free market—they have 3 larger haulers and some smaller non-traditional haulers collecting food scraps.

Rather than get rid of the mandate all together, push it down the road until after the food scrap disposal ban in 2020, and see how that plays out- then remove the hauler requirement if it doesn't make sense.

Teri Kuczynski inquired if the Agency knows who the food scrap generators are.

Josh responded that the [Materials Management Map](#) on the solid waste website shows all food scrap generators in VT and estimates for what amount of food scraps they produce. ANR is working to update the database and errors can be emailed through the map's interface.

Chris Beling: EPA has an [Excess Food Opportunities](#) map. The model is based on VT's Materials Management Map. The data is from 2016.

Tom Kennedy commented that the most important goal is to get to 2020 and keep the food scrap ban in place.

Food scrap collection is a very immature market—people are using various methods for collection and the amount of contamination varies dramatically.

There needs to be a focus on educating consumers. For example look at how much time it's taken with recyclables and there is still contamination.

In order to do this right, there needs to be a strong commitment to outreach and education.

Craig commented that the focus should stay on the large generators.

The Agency should start with the biggest generators and move slower

Though it will be pretty hard to get the Legislature to drop the food scrap ban.

VT Waste Composition Study, Castleton Polling Residential Composting Survey

(1:55 – 2:25)

Josh gave an overview and explained that the goal of study was to estimate what households are doing with their food scraps.

38% selected multiple methods

58% separate food scraps for composting (home composting, drop off, curbside collection) or feeding to animals

52% put food scraps in trash

Cathleen asked who received survey?

Natalie Starr, DSM responded that it was a random sample statewide to those 18 or over.

Overall the response rate was pretty high.

Josh said that in Maine there was 35-45% participation in Maine for a free food scrap collection program so this seems fairly in line.

Meredith inquired if the weighting was geographic?

Ted Siegler, DSM responded that weighting didn't change things much.

Meredith inquired if multiple surveys were offered and whether there was any incentive.

Ted explained that there was no incentive, but the survey was sent 3 times with reminders.

Chris commented that a MA DEP contractor did a similar phone survey and 37% of their respondents said they composted.

Natalie believes that when participants are asked on a phone survey that there is bias toward saying yes.

Josh stated that solid waste program staff will be working to estimate food scrap diversion once the results of the waste composition study sorts are complete.

Josh mentioned that the Organics infrastructure RFP proposals are just in and that the Agency will have recipients publicized by January (awardees will hear sooner).

Next Steps –

Next meeting: Consider holding a meeting sometime in the first part of the new year. Solid waste program staff will reach out to the group with dates.

The results of the waste composition study will be ready in January if the group wanted to meet to review those.

Biennial Solid Waste Report:

Comments due by Nov 15th

The report is due to the Legislature by January 15th.
