

Maine Materials Management Task Force Small Group Discussion #5

Regionalization/Scaling Up Access to Diversion Services Small Group Discussion

Meeting Agenda: Discuss scaling up access to diversion services and reduce VMTs

In attendance: Mark Draper, Carla Hopkins, Jamie Garvin, Josh Kelly, Juliana Beecher, Vannessa Berry, Abbie Webb, Alex Zipparo, Greg Williams

*Attendees introduced themselves and the work they do.

Presentation: Josh Kelly (Solid Waste Program Manager at Vermont DEC)

History

- Disposal fees and taxes (\$6 a ton)
- State government plays a big role
- Towns have a solid waste plan that complies with the state. This plan was made to move towns away from unsustainable or unhealthy waste management.
- Josh shared a map of Vermont's solid waste management entities. There are three types of entities:
 - *Independent* towns
 - *Alliances*: towns have autonomy and have to pass ordinances individually, but towns work together to come up with plans
 - *Districts*: towns have to work together to pass ordinances, they are similar to a unit of government that has power
- Vermont produces 1/10th of Massachusetts waste, meaning it is difficult to form large-scale waste management
- Over time, Vermont has moved towards more diversion than disposal
- Big Cost - collecting hazardous waste, HHW (household hazardous waste)
 - How to deal with this cost? - Towns come together to reduce cost of HHW (regional solution), pulling resources, regional landfill

Questions

- It does not say how to manage HHW? Or violations?
- Who should be managing this waste? - state, private, regional?
- Concern: Towns are *not* responsible for getting providers to haul waste, but they only have to provide a list of providers and individuals have to contact them
 - Towns might suffer from too much to manage (education, recovery, waste, etc). However, some towns do well at this, and others do not. Towns do well if they have the proper resources and leadership.
- A low population can help with communication – ex. Vermont SWIPE

- Maine is not very different from Vermont. It is more about “What are you requiring the municipalities to do?”

Pay as you throw: every municipality implements a pricing system for waste by volume or weight. The revenue from pay as you throw stays in the town.

- Pro: stops a lot of outside trash coming in, increases recycling
- Cons: Complaints will likely come, and low-income will have a larger burden for this pay (equity issue)
- Where could composting and anaerobic digesters come in?
 - food waste ban or food scrap collection
 - There is concern about infrastructure. We would need a couple years to build infrastructure before the law goes into effect. There should also be a transition period as the law comes into effect.
- Disposal data: it is hard to track because it is highly affected by the economy
- Josh is going to send a couple of helpful docs
- Josh also mentioned he is currently working on flooding events: we need better disaster response plans

Megan Discussed Regional Councils

Megan moved the discussion to thinking about recommendations and actions for Chapter B equity Goal #1 (increase access to waste diversion programs for low-income households, renters, and rural communities)

- EcoMaine is currently starting this action – it could be helpful to learn from this pilot project
- EPR for Packaging Needs Assessment – we could use this assessment to focus on the areas with the highest needs
- Should we start laying the groundwork for disposal and diversion programs? We could propose that there needs to be some planning for that transition.
- Identify funding (USDA, EPA, etc.) to support a regional planning organization and technical support
- Delegate a planning review and support to county or regional orgs/government
- HHW collection days: this would help with storms and help avoid harm
- *Megan:* We need to think more in the future. If we have time to prepare, what do we want?
 - Let the local community keep the money from pay as you throw instead of going to the state
 - Technical assistance action stands out the most
 - Establish a good infrastructure (maybe through a program that provides a network of provider - strengthen local and regional technical assistance for planning

- MRRA could be a good organization. They provide a lot of education and outreach, but they are short staffed. A state planning office could also be beneficial.
- Recommend that state level planning include waste management
- Explore partnerships with outside organizations in terms of internships, fellowships, AmeriCorp, Climate Corp, UNH fellowships
- Have local ambassadors to help with cultural considerations in technical and planning support
- Make sure electronic waste is included in recommendations
- Consider planning or scoping work to look at unit-based or volume-based pricing for waste disposal: to help ramp up diversion programs
- Communities need to quantify emissions for materials and waste