



Recycle This! Newsletter

*Newsletter of the Maine State Planning Office, Waste Management & Recycling Program * Spring 2008*

Augusta Update



This session there were a few bills dealing with solid waste and recycling. Of these, LD 810 An Act to Improve Solid Waste Management, garnered the most attention. This bill, actually carried over from last year's legislative session, has had many work sessions as legislators and interested parties worked to arrive at common ground on and possible changes to the State's solid waste policy and programs. The bill, sponsored by Representative Duchesne of Hudson, has had several versions but the joint Standing Committee on Natural Resources on March 6 appeared to have reached conclusion on their deliberation on the bill. Within the bill: recycling and source reduction requirements are extended to processing facilities; reaffirms that it is the policy of the state to use the Solid Waste Management Hierarchy as a guiding principle in decision-making to solid waste management and that this policy applies to both waste generated within the state as well as solid waste imported to the state; expands the State Planning Office's analysis of the marketplace consolidation and consumption of disposal capacity; and other issues.

In addition to LD 810, there were several other bills on solid waste. LD 1964 and LD 1983, sponsored by Senator Schneider of Old Town, were considered by the Committee. LD 1964: proposed development of odor standards for landfills was added to LD 810; and directs DEP to undertake a review of establishing landfill buffer zones. LD 1983 language dealing with truck weights was unsuccessful in passing and other aspects of the bill, dealing with tracking landfill consumption and having the SPO and DEP determining their ability to control the different and various waste streams flowing into the state-owned landfills became included in LD 810.

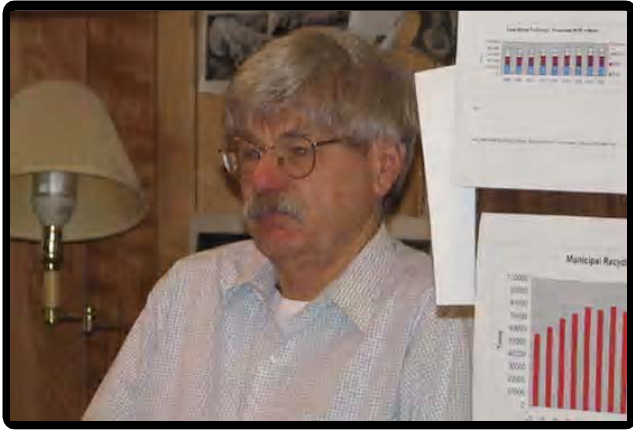
Attention! Last Paper Copy! Recycle This! Newsletter Goes Electronic

For the last several years, we have given our readers the option to subscribe to the electronic version of **Recycle This Newsletter!** We touted the advantages of the electronic edition over that of the paper copy: delivered more quickly; pictures in color; paper saved; postage saved; and there were more. There are two important issues that the State Planning Office Waste Management and Recycling Program are wrestling with now: In time of huge shortages in state revenues, an effort made by recognizing savings in printing and postage can be a significant; and looking at the team mission of waste reduction, we recommend better use of paperless communication. It is time that we practice what we preach.

Actually we are looking at this time to revamp our efforts. We will turn to a report posted online, linked to our web site or accessed directly on the website. Thanks to the brainstorming of George and Sam everyone may realize benefits from our change. Since we won't be restricted to the need for publishing software, we will employ our regular word processing Microsoft software. This change alone should allow more of the team and maybe even guests to contribute. Sam has also suggested an annual index. It is hoped that the team will be freer to contribute and provide an opportunity to be known better and to serve better. With fewer restrictions, it is hoped that we will also generate more issues - or rather more communication about our issues, hopes, and efforts.

Now for the last time we ask again for your e-mail address and that of those who you would like to see receive our messages - committee members, municipal officials, staff members, and concerned citizens. E-mail us with your address and drop your cards off at our booth at the MRRA conference. Finally, we would ask for your patience as we make the transition.





Hank Tyler moves on.

To some, he was known as “Bulldog”. To everyone he was respected for his persistence in his efforts to collect data. It is true that many questioned the figures; however there was a common understanding that the state’s data had been raised to a level to which no one was accustomed to before the arrival of Hank. He came to Waste Management and Recycling with the same commitment and zeal he exhibited in his earlier years with natural resources issues at the State Planning Office.

It was not long ago that Hank had convinced everyone that he would never retire, so when he announced his intentions to the team, the news struck like a bomb shell. We wish him well.

For Hank, it is exciting as he leaves state government for a management position with the Vaughan Family Foundation in Hallowell. Good luck, Hank!

MaineRecycles Materials and Consultation.

Just a reminder to the municipalities and recycling committees across the state: Maine Recycles posters and materials are available from the State Planning Office or may be downloaded from the Maine Recycles web site. You will also find ideas for getting the word out in your community in the online tool kit, www.mainerecycles.com or call Jetta Antonakos at (207) 287-9074 .



Click/Click On/Off

Some of us grew up with Ready Kilo-watt as a smiling friend. Each electric bill had information fliers accompanied by the image of not some gruff lineman but rather an incandescent light bulb mounted on a body resembling the clash of Thor’s lightning bolts. In school, we learned that an incandescent was a bulb and had a filament encased in glass, while a lamp was a tube filled with gas that glowed when when power was introduced. Then something changed. A few years ago when an elementary school teacher called the SPO and asked if there were any directions for making musical instruments from the dead fluorescent lamps that she had found in the basement of her school, the panic button was pushed in less than a second. A major part of the residential universal waste is made of fluorescent tubes.

Flourescent tubes or lamps have served us well. Coming in a variety of of shapes and lengths, they now assume new recognition with the compact variety. We now say that we weigh the recognized hazards of the lamps with their efficiency and long life. In 2007, Efficiency Maine provided over 800,000 rebates for the purchase of compact flourescent Lamps in a step to promote energy conservation. Our transfer stations collected almost 100,000 spent flourescent lamps in 2007.

Also in 2007, there was an incident involving the Maine Department of Environmental Protection and a citizen requesting information about cleaning up after a cfl breaking in a child’s room. While the advice was proper and clean up correctly done by a professional company, it proved to be expensive and impractical, if lamps were to be promoted further. This resulted in a formal study of the disposal of cfls and guidelines for proper use and handling. The report can be found in its entirety on the web site of the Maine Department of Environmental Protection, Bureau of Remediation & Waste Reduction on the following link:

<http://www.maine.gov/dep/rwm/homeowner/cflreport.htm>.



Single Stream? Single Sort ... of !

Just about a year ago, the newly named ecomaine invited all in Maine in the recycling arena, as well as their "RWS" municipalities to a meeting to announce a new decade or era of "single sort" recycling. Twenty-one member communities won our respect and admiration for making tough decisions that took the "RWS" municipalities beyond renaming, reorganizing, and to a bold commitment.

The announcement allowed the interested parties as well as the stakeholders to hear: an introduction to single "sort" recycling; a formal presentation of ecomaine plans; the opportunity to ask questions; and to leave with research or studies that lead to the changes offered in southern Maine. With a strong base of member municipalities which represents a wide cross-section of Maine communities, the change in operation represented a model setting for study or even the laboratory for pursuing this strategy to increase the recycling rate.

After all, single "sort" was seen particularly friendly to curbside collection; the environment; and even transportation from some distance. The long awaited day of accepting all 7 plastics had arrived - along with a seemingly magical-mystical optical sorter for plastics. Apartment houses might be looked at more favorably as the new operation actively sought to capture and process higher volumes. Education surfaced as an important component of the operation and the message delivered was expanded to the value of going "Green". The change would make recycling more convenient - easier. Easier - all problems solved! That was just about a year ago.

What happened next - that is right after the introduction was quite surprising. There had been presentations from the Casella group presenting "the Recycle Bank". Having been proven in other places - particularly Philadelphia - it was soon to be coming to Maine. This concept reinforced the idea that recycled materials were valuable. The value was not only as a resource but in rewards.



As explained, bags of recycled material would be introduced into the system with a bar code. Environmentally conscientious companies would sponsor the program with rewards. Coupons to national chains or for recognized products would be exchanged.

Results documented especially in neighborhoods in Philadelphia showed promise. Rates increased rapidly as residents saw their waste interpreted in Pepsi or shopping at Home Depot, it is believed were the examples used. This represented another totally new strategy for the State as offered up by the private sector for the municipalities. After several years of Pay As You Throw or Pay Per Bag, recycling was taking on a new look.

Meanwhile the State and the established network of the municipalities and the Recycling Industry had already arrived at that juncture in the existence of recycling where it was recognized that recycling had to be promoted in a different way. Given that the infrastructure was in place, it seemed that recycling had to be more than promoted but actually sold. This had to be the time when the public had to be captured and held accountable for their actions - threatened, conjoined, or pleaded.



into limbo. With a separate surprise move, the private sector stepped forward with their own "single stream" recycling. The recycling unit of the multi-faceted Casella operations, FCR - Goodman Recycling announced the option of "single stream" recycling to their clients. materials would be collected, baled and trucked to a Massachusetts Materials Recovery Facility. When the service area had been defined, a processing facility would be constructed.

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From there, lines became gray. Where communities had initially banded together to make recycling happen in the State. Now individual communities were and are being courted away for their materials. Smaller communities expressed concern of not only lost opportunity but rather lost ability. Communities faced lost revenues, and there was fear that maybe jobs would be lost. Regional centers that committed to supplying product were still having communities approached for materials. In short, there was a great deal of lasting confusion and limited commitment outside of the ecomaine communities.

In one of the few bottle bill states in the country, a reputation had been born and touted by the environmental community. Maine was a leader in many respects for developing not only an image of having quality life but also having residents that were constantly seeking the ability to contribute to a quality lifestyle. In practice, the citizens of Maine had earned a reputation for recycling without glass contaminants and in general a high quality product for the mills for paper and all materials in recycling. Some question the quality of single stream materials and some question some of the other proposed environmental benefits of the single stream process. We must believe that our recycling universe will straighten out in the near future.



Kelli Currier accepts the Maine Recycles Week Sponsor plaque for NewPage in Rumford

Sponsors

This November 8 to 15 will be the 10th anniversary of Maine Recycles Week. Over the years, schools have enjoyed the posters as well as the poster competition. The communities have come to look forward to the calendars - just as school teachers have been faithful about making requests for the classroom. There is less demand of businesses for their pledge to recycle; however over the years a wonderful partnership has developed with our sponsors. Whatever has been done has been made possible by our sponsors.

Amazingly there is little change in the core of sponsors. If anything, a few new sponsors have joined the ranks through the years. Those that could help always did, and if they couldn't help they politely apologized for problems that really didn't belong to them. Even though, the Maine Recycles Week campaign was and is a public/private partnership, the steering committee always stepped forward to suggest sponsors and never were wrong. From my position, it was marvelous not to ask for money but rather to suggest that the time had come for another year or that once again Maine Recycles Week needed help. Our sponsors came forward.

With the help of the sponsors, we saw the contests grow. School participation grew from a few dozen to more like a hundred or 150. While this seemed small, we had to remind ourselves that it was a significant percentage of the total number. The last couple of years actually started us thinking that it was possible to recruit 50% of the elementary schools, which would almost involve the same number of communities, and take us to our goal of 50% recycling.



**Think about it?
Thank You!**

Television Alert!

On February 17, 2009, television stations across the country will cease broadcasting an analog signal and the transition to digital will be complete. What does this mean?



The Federal Communication Commission (FCC) recognized some time ago that digital broadcast had many advantages over analog and took steps to see the transition through. Households using the off-air signal would need a digital set.

Without the recycling facilities that are already taking television sets, facility managers are indeed wondering what this will mean to volume and demand on resources.

It is estimated that at least 35% of the state's households have no idea that this transition is going to take place. Next winter we could lose broadcast reception and those



without a clue will continue to watch the snow on the screen believing that they are watching February weather reports, the Winter Olympics, or stations that have gone off the air. It is also thought that approximately 87,000 households in Maine will be impacted though.

Approximately 58% of our homes are on cable and will not be immediately affected by the digital broadcast transition; however consumers are viewed as continuing to replace their televisions at an annual 16% rate per year through 2010. DVD rental has all but totally replaced the VHS format and



served to help herald in digital quality. In 2007, our transfer stations collected and recycled 43,407 television sets. Spread over three-to-five years and allowing for those who will hoard analog TVs along with their VHS video tape collections, we should have a relatively smooth transition.

The End Is Near!

This day started much the same as any other day; however my coworker was not as positive as usual. I was thinking that he was either thinking about retirement or suicide. When I ask about the gray cloud hanging over him, it turned out that he really was not looking forward to the day's agenda. Since he is more often than not consoling me, this was my turn to talk him out of thinking about the end. The ensuing conversation turned out to be more like a dialogue with Alan Lord, our manager of Central Maine.

It all began with my asking him what he would do if he retired. To which, he replied that he would be perfectly happy as a bagger at a supermarket. Having often thought of that myself, any debate was immediately dropped and we entered into an exercise of attribute listing - the pros of that particular position.

You meet many nice people. You are with them for a very short time - too short a time to cause trouble or many hard feelings. Goodwill was to be earned by refusing tips. Here you were getting exercise without the cost of a membership to a club. You were supplying a valuable service to the customer. It was shortly before the list reached an exhaustive point that the conversation took a turn into the wind. There was another service that we could add. How about if we retired early and worked at source reduction at the cashier's counter?

Just imagine!

Paper, plastic, or clothe? No, we aren't using bags today. Hold out your hands!

No sir! You really don't want that. Just look how it is packed!

You didn't compare products very well! We'll wait while you go back and take another look at the shelves.

Oh sure, three small cans when you could have gotten the next size and saved money and wrapping.

Did you ever wonder why there is more salt in the bottled water than there is in the can of soup? Do you need either?

Weren't those Styrofoam cups right next to paper?

Come on! You can start thinking any time now.

...And so it goes that the retired planners from the SPO Waste Management and Recycling Team save the World from Waste and Ruin in their true calling as the "Opinionated Baggers".

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