

State of Florida 75% Recycling Goal Technical Advisory Group (TAG) Meeting

Conclusions and Recommendations

Background:

By the end of 2020, the State of Florida is tasked to achieve a Municipal Solid Waste (MWS) recycling goal of 75%. In order to meet the 2020 recycling goal, Florida must find ways to improve and expand recycling. The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), with assistance from the Southern Waste Exchange, Inc. (SWIX), held a Technical Advisory Group (TAG) meeting to focus on getting an understanding of the current status and developing actionable items, policies and programs from stakeholders. Participants, in an open and moderated discussion format, discussed and made specific recommendations to the FDEP about what the current impediments to increasing recycling in Florida and what actions the state can take to overcome these obstacles. The meeting goal was to use the information obtained to develop a strategic plan focusing on increasing recycling to present to the legislature.

Conclusions:

The following are conclusions from the discussions.

- Florida current recycling rate is approximately 56%.
- While the increase in the recycling goal has improved in recent years, the consensus of TAG experts is that the state is not likely to reach the 2020 goal of 75%.
- Getting to 75% would require a multi-strategy approach and economic resources.
- Using a weight-based target, as now in place, has inherent limitations, including not having the ability to compare the beneficial or detrimental environmental and energy impacts of specific recyclable materials.
- Single Stream Contamination hinders processing at Material Recover Facilities and effects the marketability and revenue received for recyclables.
- Lack of markets for Glass is a major issue for most counties and municipalities in the state and needs to be addressed.

- Impact of foreign initiative's i.e., China's National Sword may have devastating impacts on recyclable material markets for Florida and the rest of the country.

Recommendations to try and get to 75% recycling goal:

The following are bulleted recommendations/comments from TAG participants. The comments have not been edited and are displayed as inputted into the online comment system or submitted to SWIX for inclusion in this report.

- The Recycling Goal should be left intact as it is now and let the goal sunset in 2020 and adjust then to a sustainable materials management goal using a system that accounts for environmental and energy impacts of all materials.
- The state should consider assisting and encouraging local governments in the construction of more WTE facilities.
- Consider initiating a Bottle Bill in the state.
- Karen spoke of input received from numerous TAGs. That being said, I think the State should assemble a TAG specifically to deal with replacing the 75% tonnage-based goal with something that focuses on source reduction and recycling rather than separating tons that are never recycled. Separating and stockpiling is not recycling.
- *How will an "apples to apples" comparison be made depending on the report mechanisms local governments choose? If a recommendation is made to include SMM, energy measurement, along with weight board. *Any way to have mandatory recycling law, or appropriate ordinance, rule, etc. GREAT JOB TODAY!! * Recycling goal should link to infrastructure and markets that are available. State should support development of more of these. - The challenge is our goal should link to what we can accurately achieve. - How much of weight in state is recyclable in theory? How much recycling can infrastructure and market place support? - Suggest the state re-evaluate the goal...jobs from recycling are important. *Florida is not a level playing field. Disposal cost are more higher in south Florida, making it more cost effective to recycle in the south. In north Florida who pays the increased cost? Taxpayer, Shareholder? How do we incentivize? - C&D targets are over stated. Builders, contractors and haulers are source separating materials with value. It is cost effective to spend millions of dollars for a C&D MRF when you are attempting to recycle residue (with little value)? - Many municipalities do not understand the goal and how the goal impacts each entity (some believe funding is tied to their annual result). - Refocus on recycling 75% of materials with value. We are "End-Market Oriented" when end markets die....at what point does cost override the goal? -

Private companies will recycle if there is a financial benefit. Consumers are less likely to recycle if it costs more than landfilling. Markets are less likely to improve unless recycling is mandated. *Should recommend to legislature that goal be modified after 2020. - Need large and sustained education effort for State's citizens and leaders about waste management and recycling (\$\$ appropriation needed for this). - Perhaps put more emphases on per capita waste reduction in Florida as a way of tracking progress in source reduction and recycling. *C&D Recycling - RSM Fines = 20% + by weight. - Mandate or intent use as ADC. - Decentivize use of clean fill/mulch/etc. - Landfills underpriced scale rates to attract material undercutting C&D facilities. Tax landfill scale rates and use proceeds to either encompass RSM use as ADC or to subsidize recycling of low margin or negative margin materials. - Require deposits from builders during permitting which are refundable when material is disposed of at "approved C&D facilities". One approval criteria should be achieving a certain diversion rate. - Source separation/recycling competes with C&D recycling. At construction or demolition projects, high margin materials are cherry picked.....no margin materials are disposed. As source separation and recycling increases, C&D recycling facilities become less feasible as high margin materials is cherry-picked from the C&D stream. - Give 100% credit for concrete used to fill ponds as the pond is filled as apposed to only when the pond is discovered as land. *Definitely believe that SMM need to prioritize approach to state's priorities to approach and make progress towards goal. - Florida needs more policies to drive progress toward the goal. Renewable energy from waste incentives (e.g., grants for anaerobic digestion, pyrolysis). The state need policy support...Massachusetts has a law for commercial food waste disposal ban and recycling. Minnesota has statewide "Pay-As-You-Throw" requirement for all local governments. - The Florida Legislature needs to support local efforts with policy.

- Waste Management recommends: 1. FDEP, the Legislature and stakeholders work together on a statewide redefinition of the 75% goal's measurement transitioning from a weight-based model to a Sustainable Materials Management model utilizing the EPA's WARM model "Energy" calculations to maximize the Environmental Benefit of recycling in Florida while insuring Economic Sustainability. The SMM model should include a cost metric. 2. The emphasis should be on recycling more of "materials that matter environmentally" and also MUST HAVE viable markets. (if there is no market, it is not a recyclable material). 3. Stakeholders should work together to educate Legislators, other industry/business groups, and Florida residents on this "back to basics" recycling goal that focuses on Environmental Benefit and Economic Sustainability.
- * A "cradle to grave" accountability and mentality needs to take shape in the state of FL. * Public information needs to be readily available, streamlined and consistent re: contamination factors and tolerances, resources for material

movement and values offered in the grades of commodities. * The Industrial and manufacturing industries need to be under strict mandates to regulate their waste and diversion effects. * Dual and single stream Recycling needs to be a mandatory practice statewide for commercial businesses, libraries, schools, hotels, prisons and hospitals. * Implementing a “pay as you throw” program incentive for the MSW produced from residential properties. * Events, conventions and attractions that produce a large tonnage of waste should be held to mandatory recycling guidelines and efforts. * Buy back centers for metals, glass, plastic and occ work well. Not only does it offer revenue to be placed back into the consumer loop, it creates jobs and assists in the clean up efforts and education for the environment. * Municipalities should at minimal offer composting opportunities, while engaging the agriculture industry .. farmers, vegetative sites and WTE locations. * It should be promoted by local and state government officials that any city with a high tourist volume, provide diversion opportunities in a transparent way. * All counties in FL should have mandatory regulations for proper diversion of C&D, vegetation and mixed metals. In addition to their due diligence to offer curbside recycling and commercial recycling through drop off sites, dumpsters, carts and compactor services.

- Four (4) suggestions: (1) Keep the 75% goal, as it is in the spirit of the legislature, but instead of having it weight based, can we reach the goal by saying diversion based, i.e. how much waste was generated vs how much waste actually went in to a landfill? (2) Can the state start identifying the land needed for a regional waste system? As the state population grows, and the need to more economically manage the growing waste stream grows along with it, there won't be the open space nor constituent will to cite new landfills or other final resting places. Can land be identified and purchased for private entities to eventually bid for design/build/operate contracts for a web of regional transfer stations that all feed their waste to a (or two or three) central WTE facilities and MRFs? (3) Can there be a study done to see the cost and carbon footprint of recycling specific items (collecting and processing) and compare that to the final outcome and/or revenue received to see if it makes economic sense to collect specific items. (4) What incentives can the state offer businesses to bring glass recyclers here.
- Stick with the 75% recycling goal, but recommend an incorporation and "weight" of SMM that Dr. Townsend spoke of (i.e. tires that go to WTE have a higher energy benefit than getting recycled, so they get an additional credit) - Include organics in recycling numbers - Add language to give counties more leverage on cities' recycling efforts - Provide Counties with statewide resources on technology, programs, grants, etc. that could help with recycling advancements in Counties with fiscal restrictions (i.e. inability to invest in WTE).

- Keep it. Trying to change it, with so few legislators even being aware of it (and it's impact) is a waste of resources. Need to raise awareness first.
- I don't care how we count the material I think we need more markets or ways to move material.
- 1. Categorize concrete and yard waste as certified recycling to increase the material reported and the accuracy of reported tonnages. 2. Create incentives or penalties for C&D companies to recycle valuable C&D material. 3. Move to SMM or a volume-based reporting method.
- Sustainable Materials Management as a concept does not appear to be developed to any degree that would allow it to be put forward as an alternative to a weight based recycling goal. It is still a very nebulous term with no accepted framework to use and incorporate the variety of possible impact measures i.e. landfill diversion, GHG emission reduction, energy foot print, etc, so as to provide a comprehensive goal for waste reduction/recycling. And be able to communicate it to policy makers and the public. The reason simplified measurement tools like weight based recycling goals are used are that they are easier to understand, measure and communicate. And that is not even perfect due to the many ways and materials that states and communities have to choose from to do the weight based recycling measurements. SMM really does not seem at all feasible if the State is not going to provide any resources to create and target the extreme examples of what should be targeted with education and goals. Oregon appears to be using it to target large impact items in the waste stream to target i.e. carpet, food wastes and one other item with specific goals and programs to achieve something. Even here though it is limited a few items. Still need an over arching type goal to address all of recycling and waste reduction so as to move it along and maintain some requirements. And that is where Florida lacks also. With no enforceable mandates or resources to incentivize getting it done voluntarily, it will not be sustained on any consistent basis statewide past 2020. Some Counties and Cities will still feel compelled as part of their Integrated Waste Management Plans and response to citizen demands to include some form of recycling in their programs, but it won't be consistent or in any way related to a State Goal or effort. One reason there is not a lot of business recycling is because it is not mandated and businesses are not requesting it. And this is almost 30 years into it. The majority of business have very limited recycling other than maybe cardboard. Only bigger businesses have seen the significant financial benefits of recycling and have the space and resources to do it. Many small and mid-size businesses have not committed the resources to get their easily recycled containers and papers out of the waste streams due to the perceived limited financial impact on each individually. Collectively it would be significant though. Businesses should have the same requirements and accessibility to recycling as residential. Those communities

that do this have the higher recovery/recycling rates. The state has also softened and stepped back from their earlier requirements for commercial C&D recycling. This needs to be strengthened and supported again to achieve greater C&D recycling and diversion. Requirements for commercial food waste recycling and diversion as well as expanded support for food waste reduction and reuse are also needed. Again it takes resources to increase food waste reduction. The State needs to be more involved and promoting the different national food waste reduction and recovery efforts.

- I am responsible for a Class III landfill and 5 transfer/recycling stations in central Florida. We recycle everything in the waste stream that is profitable for us to remove using basic labor and equipment. Profitability is primarily determined by our cost to retrieve the material and the income we receive from the processor (less transportation). We are able to recycle steel, concrete, aluminum, green waste, and copper that are large enough for use to see and remove from the tipped loads. In order for us to recycle other materials we need to be paid to do so, or we lose money and potentially go out of business. I think the market (locally and globally) has revealed what we (Florida) is able to attain, which is something to not be ashamed of. Let's keep the goal at 75% (weight based) and open the conversation on other ways to look at protecting our resources and environment. I believe this was the big picture view presented by Dr. Townsend and others. I thought the meeting was great and appreciate the opportunity to provide input.
- If the state is serious about making a valid attempt at increasing recycling rates then they should consider implementing more serious policies such as a landfill ban on OCC, mandatory commercial recycling, etc. I think in the long run, moving towards the SMM model is best. The state should also assist with developing domestic markets for recycled commodities.
- Increase competition in the collection and recycling of construction and demolition (C&D) debris to spur innovation and increase C&D recycling rates. Consider these suggestions to Increase Recycling of C&D Debris in Florida. 1. Local regulations: local governments are tasked with solid waste collections. Any legislation offered will not impact or preempt any local collections regulations. 2. Exclusive C&D franchises: offering exclusive franchises guarantees haulers monopolies over certain service areas. In so doing, innovation and competition are obstructed. Exclusive franchises for C&D should be eliminated. 3. Grandfathering provisions: In order not to trip constitutional prohibitions, all current contracts, tipping fees, and all other agreements will be honored until their contractual end. Existing contracts may not be substantially amended or extended. After termination, exclusive franchise agreements for C&D collections will be prohibited.