

MEETING NOTES
Regional Solid Waste Plan Advisory Committee
Recycling Sub- Committee Meeting

Date of Meeting: 3:00 PM, Thursday, November 18, 2010
Meeting Location: Union County Government Center
155 North 15th Street, Lewisburg, PA
Meeting #: **Recycling Sub-Committee Meeting #1**
Attendees: See Attached Sign-in Sheet
Counties Represented at Meeting: Lycoming
Snyder
Union
Columbia
Montour
Stakeholders Represented at Meeting: SW Haulers
Recycling
Municipal
Citizens
B & I

Terry Keene from Barton & Loguidice opened the meeting. Everyone introduced themselves and announced which stakeholder group they represent. Terry commented that we've seen feedback from all the stakeholder groups regarding heightened interest in more recycling. As a result, the Consultant Team felt that a special subcommittee meeting should be held, including representation from each stakeholder group so that we can brainstorm and work out some details. During this meeting, the consultant team will also present ideas and provide their perspective. This then was the intent of this meeting.

Jason Yorks from LCRMS commented on the different types of recycling, explaining that single stream is growing in the marketplace. He also explained the difference between how it is here in the Region and how changes in collection methods can cause problems for the MRF. Cardboard, chipboard, junk mail, etc are things being considered to include in the recycling collection/processing changes that are being proposed. Jason said the idea is to offer dual stream recycling - fiber materials in one bag, and tin, aluminum, and plastic in another bag. Glass will not be included due to it becoming broken, and thus contaminating the remainder of the materials. Large cardboard will not be included in this proposed collection method - there will be a size restriction on the pickup for the hauler, although large cardboard can be handled in other ways. Jason feels they can implement the proposed changes next year with the current approved modifications at the LCRMS. The haulers have offered to offer a curbside subscription program to local residents, and deal with the subscriptions, residents, and bagged recycling.

Jason said he's also found an outlet to take the bags used for the collection and bale them so they can be kept out of the landfill. Jason stated that there is a way to sort out the

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material on the conveyors. He would like to have some sort of control over the bags used for collection of dual-stream recyclables – using the same bag for one stream and another color for the other stream, so it can be clearly identified. He said most of Central PA uses source-separated recycling collection, but he hopes haulers will participate and offer this new type of program to the public.

Joyce Hatala commented that DEP requires curbside recycling for mandated communities, that's why Jason does curbside. Jason commented that there are five (5) mandated communities in Lycoming County. Terry asked if Jason would allow the hauler to collect both bags (separately) and bring them in together. Jason said that the haulers could dump both types of bags on the tipping floor in the MRF and then his crews would separate them by color for further sorting later.

Tom Zorn asked if at the municipal level, could dual-stream be offered at existing or new drop-off locations? Jason said that if there is already a source-separated system, he would prefer not to go backwards (to a dual stream system). It introduces more contamination that way and it may be more costly for everyone involved. Education is huge because contamination in recyclables is a big deal. Jason stated that right now the hauler pays a tipping fee for all municipal waste taken to the landfill, including any recyclable material mixed with the garbage. With this new system, the haulers will have NO tipping fee for dual stream recyclables taken to the MRF, and the tonnage of material landfilled will decrease. This should result in a decrease in the hauler's cost, but it is currently unclear if this decrease will offset the costs of additional trips to pick up the recyclable materials. It will be up to the hauler to decide if they want to charge the resident for the curbside recycling program.

Jason said there would still be a drop-off site for glass and for other material not included in the dual stream collection; however, the dual stream will account for the majority of the recycled material. Once again, Jason commented that the drop off and curbside recycling collections that are source-separated now should stay that way. The dual-stream offers another method to recycle, but may introduce more contamination. It is another way to recycle, but may not be the best for everyone.

Samantha Pearson (Citizens Stakeholder) asked how the new plan benefits the resident. Terry commented that it makes it more convenient for the residents since they wouldn't need to source separate the material, and then haul it to a drop off location. This should result in a net increase in recyclables, and a net decrease in landfilled material. Wes Wertman from Montour County stated the one big downfall is that in some of the communities he picks up, the residents already pay for recycling because they are mandated. So those residents are asking the Boroughs why they have to pay the municipality for this if the residents are paying for it directly by subscription.

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Terry asked Wes to explain what services his facility offers. Wes stated that he serves several communities (4-5); some of which are drop-offs, and 3 communities that are curbside. However, every household pays the municipality for recycling in a mandated community. He started last year giving credit for recycling (if he has a contract with the customer). That satisfies some of the people, but not all. They still don't want to pay the borough a tax for those services. He also buys plastic and separates it.

Charlie Fritz from Bloomsburg does curbside collection from their residents. He also offers a drop-off to its residents and/or commercial customers. Wes said source separated was the way it started and it should be kept that way. Source-separated can be very costly.

Joyce Hatala stated that she is looking at some of these details and commented that her main concern is to get the stakeholders here to share their ideas, and discuss this. Tell us what you all think. Dave Minnear passed out the raw data that is gathered. He commented that the process is to try to figure out the best options. Joyce mentioned that mixed broken glass is a problem but glass it not collected in the dual stream system, so it sounds like it could be a good program. For people who use the drop-offs, this program isn't going to affect them either way.

Charlie asked about the communities that are mandated. Jason commented that if the haulers can prove that this program is working, maybe DEP would agree that the dual-stream collection meets the Act 101 intent for mandated communities, with the data from the haulers.

Shane Pepe from Berwick Borough said Berwick was forced to change their recycling program or they wouldn't be eligible for the 902 grants, since they are a mandated community. Berwick's experience is the exact opposite of what is being discussed here. In their borough, there are 11,000 citizens and 15 haulers. The haulers were required to do the recycling in addition to garbage collection, and to keep their costs down, Shane found that some of the haulers were mixing the recycling in the trash. The council was tired of following garbage haulers to find out if they were doing what they were supposed to do. Shane met with the garbage haulers on many occasions. For subscription service, the haulers were not being compensated for picking up the recycling so they just landfilled it. Most that did follow through with recycling took it to the Bloomsburg facility. The Borough has since awarded an individual municipal-wide contract for recycling, and the result is a 40% increase in their borough's recycling tonnages, and they know the results because JAWS weighs everything that comes in. Berwick definitely has come a long way since 2007. They still offer curbside (everything but cardboard), and a drop-off facility that Wes (JAWS) operates (green glass, clear glass, #1 & #2 plastics, paper, corrugated, magazines, card stock).

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Joyce asked everyone...what do you want and don't you want to get done in your areas? Contracts work well and the Berwick agreement sounds like a good contract. If it works, don't fix it but if it's broken, let's talk about fixing it. How are we going to keep these small haulers in business? This is an area in the Region where the majority of residents are served by subscription. The dual stream-recycling program that Jason is offering is a good way to keep small haulers in business. They can offer an additional service to their residents, and decide what they need to charge for it.

Wes said if he didn't have a facility, he wouldn't be able to do the recycling. The hauler can't collect the recycling and the garbage in the same truck. He HAS to make several trips. The hauler has to charge for this service but they need to be paid for it if they have to make two trips to the landfill. Jack asked what the Berwick contract was awarded for and Wes responded \$54,000 per year, that amounts to about \$10 per household. The next closest bid was \$130,000. Berwick met with the garbage haulers before they did this and the haulers begged Berwick to take recycling from them. Jack said that Berwick maintained the trash service but contracted the recycling service. Wes said he does sections of the area once a month. Joyce commented that Wes offered a very competitive fee for this service for the municipality this size.

Samantha from the Citizens Stakeholders Group asked why there could not be a separate hauler for the recycling? She said she pays for her trash through the Borough so she doesn't want the hauler to pick up her recycling. Sam lives in Lewisburg, which picks up newspaper, aluminum cans, and glass. It's so limited that everyone has to go to the drop-off system because the current system is so unreasonable.

Ted Heaps said recycling is not cheap; it's a service and needs to be charged. He likes single stream and would like to keep that as an option.

Dale asked if Jason would take crushed bags. Jason said it doesn't matter as long as it doesn't have glass. Samantha said in her area there are haulers taking everything south, and some of the schools have contracts where the haulers are taking everything. The kids are going home saying that they recycle everything at school and the parents are going to start wanting that same thing at their homes. Jesse said he's seen the facilities outside the Region that material is going to. The quality is lower. Samantha said we should use the term "modified" single stream instead of "dual stream"; there are ways to compete with that. She suggested that we come up with a system that deals with each type of material. Jesse said there are many factors, transportation, wax cardboard, and we also have to determine if the value is worth the effort required. There are people that offer recycling of all recyclable materials, and if that is desirable to the residents, then some of the haulers are going to lose market share, some of the larger haulers will offer a bag system. Joyce said that this is true. The smaller haulers may lose market share as larger haulers come into the region, and offer single stream. She also commented, however, that source

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separated gives the highest quality material, and that municipalities should stay with that if it is working for them. If it isn't broken, don't fix it.

Wes said the haulers have to focus on which recyclables they can sell.

Terry commented that:

- 1) we have to keep in mind the existing system is MRF's that take source-separated material. If you want to support the local business in the region, that's what you have. Jesse commented that when you're hauling 60 miles to a single stream MRF, you have to keep that in mind.
- 2) Terry feels what Jason is proposing puts the smaller hauler in a more competitive local area.

Kerry Tyson commented that he feels it's a good first step. Debbie at Snyder County said she's excited about it. Her hope is to make it as inexpensive as possible. The more opportunities to recycle and the more options there are, the better recycling is going to be. Gwen said it would be such a boom for the rural areas to those who take their trash to the recycling centers. Gwen said she would even pay extra to have it all taken by curbside.

Bob Huntington commented that he was disappointed to hear that some of the citizens weren't happy about the Union County program. He said he previously offered a truck to certain boroughs to help them with the pickups and they didn't take them. Samantha said she feels we need to work things out, even if it costs more money. She hopes the haulers will be competitive enough so that it is compelling to those who don't care about recycling. Jack said most private haulers offer a graduated level of service or other types of programs. His holdback is the facility to take it to and the efficiency of the collection. Wes has a sweet spot and it's very effective because they are close to his facility. Once he's beyond that, the costs go up.

Wes commented that education is right down the line – it's the most important thing to get people educated on recycling. Joyce stated that she likes the pay-as-you-throw programs very much, but there are other ways to make recycling work. There are a lot of communities that have a yearly fee for recycling and/or trash as opposed to pay-as-you-throw. The key is education, as well as ease of collection, and reliable service. There are plenty of ways to make recycling happen and work it out. Columbia County has a lot of drop-offs and the mandated communities have subscription services.

Dave Minnear said his opinion would be to modify the facility and offer more services to the haulers, which allow them to offer more services for the residents. Jason commented about his neighbors not recycling so we have to make it more attractive to the resident. Wes said the only way to get everyone involved is if the state would have someone go around to the landfills and inspect them. When a truck dumps, they can check that load.

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When they see tons of bottles or cardboard, they can cite the hauler. Mike said the only way it gets done is financially. There needs to be an incentive.

When Wes worked for the Borough, he was required to get addresses for those who were not in compliance. They would be sent a letter and then ultimately fined if they did not comply. They don't do that anymore. Charlie said they are not allowed to do that anymore. Terry requested we go around the room and allow every stakeholder representative to give a summary of their impression of this meeting:

Business & Industry - Jason Dagle from Wood Mode said this doesn't affect his business whatsoever. He has an arrangement with the LCRMS and single stream doesn't really affect him. Dave Minnear said the other half of B&I (the colleges) would probably be more directly involved. Jesse Pyers said it comes down to volume no matter what.

Municipal – Tom Zorn said he likes the steps that the LCRMS is taking and they are steps in the right direction. He feels that they will limp along until there is single stream available for everyone. We need to make it easy for the citizens. The other positive thing is to award a municipality-wide contract to provide some sort of curbside service, which is broader than other ideas. Sean Pepe said the only issue he has is one or two haulers agreeing to provide recycling but others not; otherwise the proposed system would help the communities as a whole. It would work if people step up and make everyone recycle – not just have certain areas recycling. Terry said we need to recognize that most of the areas use collection by subscription and if we can add recycling as an option, that will apply to at least 70% of the haulers. Preston Boop commented that he believes recycling should be source separated. Lycoming has more experience doing recycling and they use prison help that offsets normal costs to make that work but once things are mixed, it costs a lot more money to separate. He worries about the system falling apart if the prison labor was not available. He doesn't believe money is the issue with respect to minimal recycling...it's more of an education program. If the young people are taught to recycle, we see more and more recycling happening. The kids are encouraging the parents and grandparents and we're going to see more of it.

Citizens – Charlotte thinks it's a great idea. Where she originally moved from there was always single stream recycling. She worries that someone is going to come along in the future and offer an easier program and all this effort will go by the wayside. She feels it's moving in the right direction. Samantha commented that this has promise yet there is no money for education and that's important.

Recycling – Charlie said his program works and the problem with the proposed plan is that it spans five (5) counties and everywhere is different. He would prefer to keep the plan in Bloomsburg as currently arranged, but this may work elsewhere.

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Haulers – Jack agreed with Charlie, everyone is different. As for haulers, they can go to the citizens and offer different programs to them individually. Recycling needs to be simple. It's very labor intensive. What works now, is working. Jack stated that there are a lot of existing recycling programs in place and we need to make sure that they continue to function and serve the community. Use what was already being done as a base and try to develop new strategies and plans to increase recycling in what the areas are doing. Big changes can sometimes be a little overwhelming. Taking the current system and enhancing it will help it grow. Looking at it as a regional plan, he feels it's important to look at some type of format that will be effective, substantially increase recycling, and function on a regional basis. He looks at it as a jobs growth opportunity. If we manage it correctly it could conceivably create more jobs and that would be a good thing.

Terry asked Joyce to provide a final wrap up. She commented that we have a lot to look at. The dual stream's a good thing if it helps to offer some recycling to more rural areas that didn't have any in the first place. She also commented that we have very successful programs here. Bloomsburg and JAWS, and that we should encourage them to continue what they are doing. Source-separated is working there, and don't change it.

Dave Minnear said that some recycling approaches worked in the past because DEP was supplementing the cost. Future budgets may not permit DEP funding, so the new plans need to be sustainable. Joyce said the formula for Section 904 performance grant money was reduced so if you get grant money, it will be less than in the past, but it will still be there at 60% of what was funded in the past. They will look at the formula again next year. The \$2/ton DEP fee on trash has been reinstated also and is authorized for the next 10 years. That does provide some money to the recycling effort, but less than in past years.

Meeting adjourned at 4:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Cathy Johnson

EfficientC