

# COUNCIL ON RECYCLING

c/o Recycling and Solid Waste Section  
Bureau of Waste & Materials Management  
Department of Natural Resources  
Box 7921  
Madison, Wisconsin 53707  
608/266-5334

May 18, 2009

Dear Joint Committee on Finance:

In your budget deliberations, the Council on Recycling urges you to preserve State funding of the recycling cost-sharing and the Clean Sweep program. If fees supporting the segregated Recycling and Renewable Energy Fund are to go up in the next budget, a strong argument can be made for actually increasing funding of recycling programs. At a minimum, the funding should not be reduced.

The Council on Recycling was statutorily created by the Wisconsin State Legislature in 1989, with citizen members appointed by the Governor. Responsibilities include promoting the efficient and prompt implementation of state programs related to solid waste reduction, recovery, and recycling, and to advise the Governor and Legislature on such matters. It is under that responsibility that the Council writes to you regarding State funding of recycling programs in the next biennial budget.

The Governor's proposed budget eliminates the Recycling Efficiency Incentive grants, the Recycling Demonstration grants, and the Clean Sweep program. These programs have played a strong role in Wisconsin's successful residential recycling, recycling market development, and household hazardous waste collection programs, respectively. Eliminating the funding would leave important environmental work unfunded and lead to a decline in the level of environmental protection that our state has worked hard to achieve. In much of Wisconsin, household hazardous waste collection in particular often has no other source of funding than the Clean Sweep program, so its elimination likely will lead to increased incidence of improper disposal of hazardous waste.

The elimination of the above mentioned programs is proposed in the Governor's budget along with an increase in the recycling fee and environmental repair fee that are assessed on solid waste disposed in Wisconsin. This practice appears designed to create segregated fund surpluses for the legislature to sweep away for use on other purposes not related to the Recycling and Renewable Energy Fund. It imposes tremendous hardship on municipal solid waste and recycling programs because they face significant increases in their disposal costs and reduced funding for recycling and hazardous waste programs at the same time. Local governments already are faced with cutting services or borrowing more money to fill the gap in the 2009 budget left by the State's decision to lapse 10% (\$3.1 mil.) of the 2009 Basic Recycling cost-sharing monies. In contrast, when mandatory recycling was instituted in Wisconsin, the state promised to provide cost-sharing to local units of government at the rate of two-thirds of the program costs. However, current state cost-sharing is less than one third of the costs.

We urge the state to increase, or, at a minimum, not to decrease its financial support of recycling. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

John Reindl, Chair  
Council on Recycling