



Council on Recycling



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Wisconsin Organizations Join Together To Make Case for Recycling *Over 150 businesses and organizations urge reinstatement of local recycling requirements/funding in state budget bill*

Stevens Point (WI) – March 24, 2011 – More than 150 municipalities, businesses, and organizations have joined their voices to call for a restoration of local recycling requirements and state cost share funding in the proposed state budget. A sign on letter to state legislators and the governor includes well over 100 governmental and tribal units, 27 businesses or industry trade groups, and 15 non-profit organizations. The letter was written and circulated by four solid waste and recycling organizations, the Associated Recyclers of Wisconsin (AROW), Solid Waste Association of North America- Badger Chapter (SWANA), Wisconsin Counties Solid Waste Management Association (WCSWMA), and Wisconsin Council on Recycling.

The letter points out that state financial assistance for local recycling programs has come not from general fund tax dollars, but from the segregated Recycling and Renewable Energy Fund. Monies for this fund are provided by a \$7 per ton “recycling fee” assessed on solid waste disposal in Wisconsin. While this fee would continue to be collected, as indicated in the proposed state budget, the Recycling and Renewable Energy Fund would be eliminated in favor of a new “economic development” fund, with no money allocated to support local recycling programs.

Recycling supporters argue that recycling plays a significant role in Wisconsin’s economy and its continued economic development. As such, the state should continue to place a high priority on successful local collection programs, the businesses that use recyclable materials in manufacturing and the thousands of Wisconsin workers employed at these businesses.

According to AROW President Jennifer Semrau, “The recycling process turns something that would have been trash into a useful product, while providing feedstock for manufacturing, creating jobs, and adding value. That is economic development and it is working in Wisconsin. The governor’s proposed budget cuts to recycling could threaten the essential material supply chain of recyclables to manufacturers.”

More...

The market value of the roughly 400,000 tons of paper and containers collected each year from residences in Wisconsin was worth over \$40 million at 2010 average market prices. Much of this value is realized by businesses using recyclables to make new products, while local governments, as key links in the material supply chain, fund most of the costs of collecting recyclables.

Essentially, while recyclables generally earn enough revenue to pay for sorting and processing, their value is not enough to offset the costs of operating a typical residential curbside recycling program. The financial assistance, provided by the state through the Recycling and Renewable Energy Fund, has helped municipalities maintain affordable recycling collection programs and ensure an uninterrupted supply chain for industries in Wisconsin and beyond.

For twenty years recycling has been a successful private/public partnership in Wisconsin. Both municipalities and businesses have invested hundreds of millions of dollars in human resources, collection equipment, facilities, and sorting equipment. Retaining local recycling requirements and the financial assistance to municipalities will ensure these investments and the unique private/public partnerships will remain an important part of Wisconsin's economy.

The signatories of the sign on letter concluded by requesting to be brought to the table to offer their expertise and discuss any possible alternative funding models to sustain recycling programs into the future. They caution that the State must allow adequate time to develop and phase in any infrastructure changes. They state, "we can offer the technical and practical experience to help guide sound materials management policy, the ability to coordinate increased efficiency, and the willingness to participate to strengthen the economy of our great state."

To view the final Sign On letter and for information about recycling in Wisconsin visit <http://arow-online.org/recyclingmeansbusiness.html>

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About AROW

Founded in 1990, AROW is an association representing Wisconsin's recycling, waste reduction and sustainability professionals. The organization provides leadership through education, advocacy, and collaboration and promotes effective, efficient and sustainable material recovery initiatives. For details on AROW, its positions and programs visit www.arow-online.org.

About WCSWMA

WCSWMA is an association representing all Wisconsin counties, with a board consisting of elected officials and solid waste and recycling professionals. WCSWMA works to promote effective and environmentally sound solid waste management systems and resource recovery efforts. The Association facilitates communication amongst its members and associates, conducts training and provides a forum for the promotion of industry related legislation.

About SWANA

The Solid Waste Association of North America consists of solid waste program directors, engineers, consultants, private haulers, recycling professionals, equipment manufacturers/distributors, waste-to-energy professionals, regulatory officers, regional planners, and finance officers, serving more than 7500 members in 45 state and provincial chapters. Our mission is "advancing the practice of environmentally and economically sound management of municipal solid waste in North America", The Wisconsin Badger Chapter is proud to be an affiliate of the International organization and to serve Wisconsin citizens.

About the Wisconsin Council on Recycling

The Wisconsin Council on Recycling is a citizens group appointed by the Governor to advise the Governor, Legislature and state agencies on solid waste reduction, recovery and recycling policy.