

Notes
COUNCIL ON RECYCLING
February 26, 2014
Hyatt on Main Street/KI Convention Center
Green Bay, WI 54301

<p>Council Members Present: Rick Meyers, Joe Liebau, Jim Birmingham, Neil Peters Michaud, Charles Larscheid Council Members Absent: Bill Waltz, George Hayducsko DNR: Cynthia Moore, Waneta Kratz, Brad Wolbert, Kari Beetham Public: Jennifer Semrau, John Kannard/Jefferson County; Sharon Ehrhardt/Jefferson County; Mark Walter/Brown County; Becky Curtis/City of Milwaukee; George Fickau/BPR; Joe Van Rossum/UWExtension-SHWEC; Richard Aho/EWS; Dustin Nolan/City of Waukesha; Maribeth Sullivan/Waukesha County.</p>	
Call to Order	Meeting called to order at 12:39 pm
Approval of Minutes (November 22, 2013)	Minutes approved as presented by Chuck Larscheid, seconded by Jim Birmingham and approved by voice vote.
Introductions/Announcements -	Chair Rick Meyers - Introductions/Announcements
Officer Elections	<p>Nominations for each position- Chair, vice-chair and secretary- were solicited in turn, and selection made by voice vote, with no opposition. Results are: Rick Meyers – Chair Jim Birmingham – Vice Chair Secretary – Joe Liebau</p>
Plastic Recycling Subcommittee Update	<p>Jim Birmingham provided update on Film/Bags, Bottles and Rigid Container workgroup activities: Film/Bag Workgroup: Wisconsin is the incubator for WRAP (Wrap Recycling Action Program), the multi-faceted educational campaign designed to make plastic film packaging a commonly recycled commodity with a strong and growing recycling rate in the consumer, commercial and industrial sectors. WRAP builds on lessons learned during the pilot Film/bag recycling awareness campaign conducted in the City of Milwaukee in fall, 2013, and recommendations developed by the Film/Bags workgroup. The immediate goal is to extend WRAP throughout the state of Wisconsin, with the ultimate objective of extending it to other states. WRAP is supported by the American Chemistry Council’s Flexible Film Packaging Group, along with support from the WI Council on Recycling and state Department of Natural Resources, private business and brand companies such as Bemis, Trex, Ziplok, Sealed Air and Wegmans.</p> <p>The workgroup has been occupied with finalizing steps needed to implement the outreach campaign and implement the demonstration projects at commercial distribution centers and a rural drop off program. A lot of effort has gone into finalizing web-based resources – (signage, tip sheets, FAQ, online directory of collection locations) and in securing commitments from business partners in anticipation of a spring launching of a statewide outreach campaign. Final steps are also in underway to launch the collection demonstration projects in a rural setting (Dunn County), a distribution center and a grocery environment. Several local government and citizen sustainability organizations have also expressed their interest in taking on local outreach projects.</p>

	<p>Rigid Containers: The American Chemistry Council has agreed to underwrite a research study in late spring/fall to identify specific suppliers of industrial/commercial/institutional sector scrap rigid plastics that can be captured leading to the building of an infrastructure to increase recycling. The study will identify supply clusters or generators to target for greatest benefit and highest likelihood of success. The workgroup will be reconvened closer to implementation of the study and new members sought pending findings of the study.</p> <p>Bottles: Bottles group has split into 2 project teams:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Bin Distribution Network to turn soft drink syrup barrels into recycling bins <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Group has met 3 times this year with a core team meeting about every 2 weeks b. 2 Pilot projects planned for 2014 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. High school athletic fields ii. Large fair grounds c. Partnered with the Associated Recyclers of Wisconsin/AROW to collaborate on pilots and potentially to run platform for 2015 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Idea is that events/schools/parks could apply to receive bins at a low cost after signing a user agreement committing to implement best practices 2) Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association/WIAA <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Group has met two times this year b. Also working with the AROW Education Committee c. Have not yet reached out to WIAA d. In the process of writing a white paper expressing the need for increased awareness/implementation of recycling at WIAA sponsored events <p>Agricultural Film workgroup: <i>Joe Van Rossum</i> provided the update: Efforts continue to find recyclers for agricultural plastics. Two or three options may soon be available to those organizing collection events</p> <p>In December, a group of eight counties from Northeast Wisconsin met to discuss opportunities to work together. An entrepreneur attended the meeting and is working on a business plan to work with farmers to bale and collect plastic used for feed storage.</p> <p>Stakeholders continue to express a need for a source of funding to build infrastructure and get programs up and running. Agricultural plastic has minimal value for recyclers and event organizers need some financial support to hold collection events.</p>
DNR Updates	<p><i>Cynthia Moore</i> provided brief updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DNR is completing a Lean Sigma 6 project to streamline the RU reporting process, with particular emphasis in reducing staff time spent in obtaining reports not submitted by the due date. • DNR is updating its webpage on plastic film recycling in support of the

	<p>WRAP project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible Unit/RU Perspectives on funding: DNR conducted two online surveys of local government recycling programs called RUs (2011 and 2013) to get a better perspective on the impact of reduced grant funding on RU recycling programs. DNR concluded that impacts are not well communicated through numerical data, although it did discern that larger RUs are shifting costs to individual households and member municipalities. It appears that impacts are insidious and experienced increasingly over time and that while RUs are struggling, so far they have managed to keep programs together. However, DNR in hearing from a growing number of municipal members of county RUs about interest in separating from the consolidated program in the hopes of reducing costs. Currently the statutes do not define whether a member municipality can separate from a county RU (formed under resolution); DNR is considering steps to get a legal opinion from the state attorney general on this matter.
<p>Municipal recycling program funding policy/ public comment</p>	<p>The Council is seeking public input on strategies for sustainable funding of community recycling programs; the current level of state funding for responsible unit programs generally is not sufficient to maintain strong programs in face of continued local government budget challenges. State cost-share of RU recycling and yard waste programs has been reduced 41% in recent years from having off-set over 30% of net costs to now off-setting around 17% of net local costs, on average. Growth in recovery and recycling rates will be constrained without adequate funds to adopt and implement new technologies. Should the Council seek to restore/increase state funding or should it explore alternatives to the existing state assistance program? While there has been no concurrent reduction in the State-collected \$7/T Recycling Fee assessed on municipal solid waste in Wisconsin, it is viewed as unlikely that legislators would restore recycling grant dollars that they cut.</p> <p><u>Alternative funding sources:</u> If policy makers want strong municipal recovery programs to recycle household materials and yard waste, what alternatives would they like to consider if they are opposed to increasing local recycling grants to more significant cost-share levels? Shall we consider legislation creating an Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) program for household printed paper and packaging materials? Such programs are in place in Europe and Canadian provinces and are being discussed in Minnesota and a handful of other states. EPR has the potential to address the funding gap while also boosting recovery levels.</p> <p><u>State funding program:</u> One option proposed was to consider seeking incremental increases in state funding by demonstrating what MORE could be achieved if RU funding were increased. For example, if \$5M were restored to the Recycling grants program, what could be achieved? Should an incremental increase in funding join the pool of funds distributed by formula or should those additional funds be targeted?</p> <p><u>Alternative approaches to dispersing funds:</u> Another option is to adopt a different funding model altogether, one that looks at the efficiency and effectiveness of the overall system. It was noted that, while reduced expenditures on services may be considered “more efficient,” local programs</p>

	<p>are typically very lean already, so funding cuts are most likely to result in reduced effectiveness as RU's reduce services in order to operate on lower budgets. For example, the City of Milwaukee noted that because of lack of adequate funding, over the years the city has had to reduce operating hours for public collection sites, staff hours dedicated to code enforcement, and education spending. Discussion followed that in some cases, the reduction in state recycling grants is sacrificing both effectiveness and efficiency. For example, it was noted that more communities are seeking to leave consolidated, county RUs and become small individual RUs in an effort to run lower cost programs by delivering less service.</p> <p><u>What the Council wants in a recycling program is:</u> Sustainable funding, effective, efficient, fair, continuous improvement. The reduction in state recycling grants has made it harder to meet these goals. The overall system is not inefficient as is and its effectiveness is being reduced by continued cutbacks in programs.</p> <p>A recent study by the University of Wisconsin- Stevens Point concluded that RU programs are as efficient as they can be given funding constraints, and noted that citizens have broad access to recycling throughout the state because of the RU programs.</p> <p>There is sometimes the perception that privately operated programs are always more efficient than publically operated ones. Two examples of public programs that operate efficiently and effectively were brought up that we could learn from; both take advantage of economies of scale. The tri-county Brown/Outagamie and Winnebago (BOW) system works efficiently with recyclables processing performed on a regional basis through shared public investment while residents typically receive collection service from private haulers. The Watertown RU is a smaller program run as a public enterprise system that despite grant reductions has added more materials to its collection program and increased its service area. These examples are good reminders that a mix of public and private services is likely to achieve greatest success at a macro level.</p> <p>The discussion will be continued at a future meeting.</p>
Other Business/ Next meeting	Cynthia will send out a doodle to schedule the next meeting.
Meeting Adjourned	Meeting adjourned at 2:15 pm.