

Material Recovery Facility (MRF) Stakeholder Meeting Notes—October 24, 2022

9:00 Welcome/Introductions

9:05 DNR Recycling Updates

Jennifer Semrau, DNR Waste Reduction & Diversion Coordinator

NR 544 revision: RU and MRF language updates, such as RU collection standard – has been pounds per person by commodity and that does not match well with mostly single-stream collection now; multi-family “adequate” recycling; and food waste education focus

Household survey report and infographic posted online soon. Shared some results, including barriers to recycling – 39% heard recyclables end up in landfill anyway.

Recycling markets – slides provided by The Recycling Partnership showing commodity market info and average generation of recycling *pounds* per single family household per year. See slides for trends of national averages per commodity.

- Market themes: demand for recovered materials generally high, domestic capacity investment since National Sword, brand-owners with recycled content goals, recycling as public service

Slow moving OCC market currently, but there may be some options for MRFs:

- Outdoor storage if update self-certification and obtain stormwater pollution prevention permit and control litter and maintain marketability.
- Could also utilize off-site storage license exemption under NR 502.05(3)(j) for storage facility of un-containerized storage for up to 9 months with less than 5000 cubic yards on site at one time and maintain marketability. Work with regional Waste Management Specialist to update self-certification or get more information on these options.
- Could also consider source separated compost material (SSCM) compost site that are able to take paper and cardboard as a carbon source. The compost facility may or may not take the material. List of SSCM sites online and from DNR on request. On-farm compost sites are not regulated by DNR so no contact list, but that may be an option as well.
- Talk with us if you have other ideas

9:25 Guidance for MRFs: Category 30 Residual Tip Fee Exemption

Casey Lamensky, DNR Solid Waste Coordinator

- MRF residual material fee exemptions for lesser of all residual or max 10% of total accepted weight per quarter at the MRF – all statutory fees waived but pay \$0.15/ton landfill surcharge fee and any fees charged by the landfill.
- MRF must be self-certified and compliant with any plan of operation.
- MRF must certify to the landfill that they are eligible for the fee exemption.
- Tracking: MRFs know their incoming and outgoing weight. Fees paid to landfills and landfills pay fees to DNR. MRFs can use multiple landfills.

- MRFs could use draft form if they want with calculation and “proof” to landfills. Landfills could then provide the form to DNR when submitting tonnage and fees. (Draft form shown on slides)
- Feedback requested from attendees
- Landfill quarterly billing recently being done electronically
- May require submittal with quarterly landfill report in 2023

Rick Meyers: suggest to add with total that those that use multiple landfills to say % of tons to X landfill. He assumes x tons to claim, then would claim equal y% between landfills. Ex) 100 tons to claim, if 80% at one and 20% at another, claim proportionally to those two. Include that in guidance so MRFs and landfills don’t assume. Could have scenario that landfill claims greater exemption than residuals submitted. →but statute not that specific on how to use the cat. 30 exemption – doesn’t have to be equal % to each landfill. As long as residual rate matches up with fee exemption, DNR doesn’t have preference if proportional or not. We can make it clear in directions. (get info from Casey!)

Rick: What is the oversight process for the DNR on this? Casey: reviewed records periodically but haven’t been able to track overall tons and fees well so far; this form will help with that. We will state how we would be doing that moving forward.

Rick: Could look at annual MRF self-certification reports at total tons received and total claimed.

Rick: Category 30 versus 31, concern with oversight to ensure accurate reporting per each category.

Casey – certification statements on reports of C&D MRF, and know if they are qualified to use that category.

Lynn: different C&D MRF requirements, stated on WM form.

Brandon Knudtson: residual not sent to landfill, rather to waste to energy – update that language on the form

Lynn Morgan: WM has own form they use. Could see if need to migrate to this form if easier. On WM form, require it be submitted to 10th of calendar month so landfills can make adjustments on what is reported to DNR by the end of the month. Suggest putting deadline submittal date on form. Also, have certification that MRF agrees to pay the outstanding amount if amounts don’t match up. Lynn will send Casey a copy of the WM form. Casey: you can keep using your own form, not required.

9:40 Advances in Paper Cup Recycling

Matt Todd, Senior Consultant, RRS (Resource Recycling Systems)

- Foodservice Packaging Institute – focused on all single-use food service packaging (FSP), includes recovery groups including the Paper Cup Alliance
- Overall goal to increase recovery of FSP, resolve end market barriers, increase access to recycling
- cups and sleeves, containers, boxes, paper bags
- Paper Cup Recycling white paper released 2022, more research planned
- Mill commitment to paper cup recycling: FPI was working individually with MRFs, but decided to focus on mills and what they would take instead. “We Want Your Paper Cups!” release with map of sites accepting paper cups. (2022)
- Fiber from cups can become boxes, tissues, other cups, etc.
- Most mills accepting cups are east of Mississippi River, trying to work more widely

- Community partnerships program of FPI: work with MRF to get cups in right bale and also outreach and education to consumers to collect cups. Goal for curbside recycling programs collection of foodservice packaging.
- 44% of food service packaging is discarded at home or in the workplace, largest percentage.
- FPI partners with cities through contracts/MOUs to determine obligations and how to collect material/where sorted, communications plan, kick-off event, and then measure and benchmark tonnage, residue and bale audit.
- FPI provides research data, technical assistance on operational questions, end market dialogues, communications planning, assistance with educational materials (examples shown on slides)
- partners provide points of contact, “in-kind” assistance with education and outreach, sharing contacts, help with data collection, use as case study
 - RecycleFSP.org
- Pellitteri working with FPI and collecting cups also, kick off with City of Madison last year. Also working with Milwaukee and Waukesha counties. Hilltopper added paper cups on their own, willing to help out with outreach. Examples also shown from Athens GA, Detroit MI, Kent County MI, Lansing MI, Denver CO, Sioux Falls SD; results from Chattanooga TN, Louisville KY, Washington DC.
- Focus of work has been on residential side because commercial businesses have mix of haulers, many local contracts, so less outreach to businesses than residential. But if already set up with residential, opens it up to work with commercial side of things in that area.
- With change in contamination rates, did you measure that against general outreach and education as a control? For more info on that contact Maggie, info on last slide.

10:00 New Tool for Commodity Marketing: hubbIT

Blake Gordon, Director of Innovation, Georgia-Pacific Recycling

- Georgia Pacific buys paper, metals, plastics. Created hubbIT to provide access to smaller suppliers (lower volume, less transparency) to buyers. Have more reliable pick ups and consistency in getting competitive pricing, more opportunities to sell.
 - Fiber, metals, and plastics
 - hubbIT is GP’s new app to get up front prices on recyclable materials, sell it, move it. Do it quickly.
 - see grades, loads entered, guaranteed price from GP. Dynamic pricing based on markets, minimum weights, etc.
 - don’t see your material on pricing list, can submit an offer as well with preferred pick-up dates
 - can also message GP traders to discuss markets and info within the app and tied to an order
 - pricing available 24/7, regardless of volume
 - access to more reliable freight via GP’s logistics capabilities
- gethubbIT.com; hubbIT@gapac.com to email Blake
- additional market places available, platforms to pair up but buyers not always there, GP as a buyer is always there

- Matt Harter: How get connected with specific person at GP and put on an account, what is set up process? Blake: You are assigned to a GP trader when sign up. Also get full list of materials to access and prices for any commodities when sign up. Many different names for different materials, many are listed. Matt: no customer specific pricing? Blake: it is volume specific for minimum weight and will adjust as weight is input.
- David Pellitteri: With this app, is GP backing the pricing? For example, order loads and only 3 show up. Is GP financially backing the load set up on the app? Blake: Let's discuss over email together if you want mor details, but app is a "one-time" deal for x load in x time.
- Alex Nett: Will email always be there? Yes, this will not replace contact with GP trader or email – this is another tool.

10:50 Break

10:55 MRF Presentations/Discussion: Reflections on Markets, Labor, Supply Chain Impacts & Operations

1. Green Circle Recycling, *Mathias Harter: working through market downturn with cardboard and paper, where to store fiber, but other materials are moving; a smaller MRF, recent upgrades: OCC screen and glass screen, trying to clean up glass; looking at possibly starting construction and demolition materials recycling*

2. Hilltopper Refuse & Recycling, *Brandon Knudtson: (slides) 2022 operations update. Still dual stream facility but increased community demand for single stream. Steady movement of materials 1st and 2nd quarters, price drop for all material drop in 3rd quarter. Trouble moving clean tin, moving plastics, no movement of #5 PP. Deal with specialty items: e-waste, mattresses, appliances, light bulbs, batteries, others. 2% increase in total hours worked 2021 to 2022. Would like greater laborer efficiency. Key takeaways: 2.38% contamination rate (3.7% in 2020); decrease in total material by 21.8% 2020 to 2022 but unsure why. 37% decrease in glass recycling 2020 to 2022.*

David P: Glass reduction – did you see PET % increase at same time? Migration into plastics or aluminum instead? Larry Hougom: No, didn't see that. Not enough to offset reduction in glass cullet. Brandon – many Iowa collection programs not accepting glass currently. Working with bars and restaurants to keep glass separate. No issues moving the clean glass, break even.

3. Outagamie (Tri) County MRF, *Alex Nett: Staffing a big issue with Tri County. 30% staffed for past year plus. Doing more quality checks and utilizing equipment more. Not on a bus line, away from city center and competing with other industrial neighbors. Tonnage this year trending same as last few years, ~105,000 annually. Fiber market down and storing in all available spaces, only one contract with a big buyer so not many guaranteed outlets. Needs help with that. Upcoming: installing robotic AI sorting robots: two on HDPE and one on last chance residual line. Currently RFB. New upgrade to glass clean-up system to remove extras; glass fines sent to local company as sand blast media now. Looking to install new baler this fall also. Working on education, including videos, building website and apps, using BetterBin app for residents. Installed foam dome collection point this past year, food grade and packaging foam, for residents and businesses – uptick in use, about 7,000 lbs. or more collected and less foam in general curbside collection.*

How prep the polystyrene? Grant through FoamCycle. Shipping containers with foam densifier and extrudes it out, stored in gaylords and then schedule pick-up. Used for surf boards, picture frames, etc. How do you sort the polystyrene? Voluntary drop-off program only. If in carts, ends up in residual. Equipment upgrades long lead time lately? Taking longer than expected this past year to get supplies. Need to order in advance and work with contractors. Hit and miss depending on project. What is cost of foam densifier? Couple options, one does packaging only, other additional foam. \$50,000 and \$75,000 total prices accordingly.

4. Pellitteri Waste Systems, David Pellitteri: Summer '21 did big upgrade of MRF to container line and re-routing, new tech. AI matched with robots. Allowed facility to integrate paper cups and cartons, less manual. Polypropylene accepted also. Robots and opticals show up everyday, moving away from hand sorting. Hard to find employees. OCC and mixed paper trouble moving, too, but trying not to store in all spaces. Overabundance of material in marketplace. Looking at storing outside as contingency option. Glut of paper and cardboard with National Sword, too, and many fires occurred. Concerned if stored fully in buildings – can't get to a fire if it would occur. Extra sorting/baling capacity if needed to help out if others need it. Expect a rebound for plastics, unsure why so low now. Paper market likely rough next 6-9 months because mills not ordering, strong dollar which affects overseas purchasing so more coming from east and west coast to US mills. Glut of materials coming in from holidays and MN mill closing. Mills likely sitting on inventory for a while.

- How did it go with adding paper cups? Lots of wish-cycling going on already, were contaminating container lines (3-D cups). Had to figure out how to handle the material and not greatly increase residuals. Advertised how best to handle cups. Nice to have machines that pull them, works well.

5. Waste Management, Lynn Morgan: Labor shortages and fiber market troubles same as others. Economic downturn may start to turn soon. Creative storage needed before resolution of markets. Our industry viewing these issues as short-term – use automation to help staffing issues; still operating through this. \$525M in facility upgrades company-wide planned for next two years, mostly with automation. People expect more from recycling and aware of climate change and expect broader range of materials to be recycled. Putting the environmental value on recycling and industry has to step up. Regret the way the National Sword was played out in media, lasting impact that materials not being recycled and going to landfills. Short term market issues allow people to make arguments towards not investing in recycling policy. Don't want to undermine credibility of recycling in WI. Does WM take paper cups? Equipment upgrades will be key to promoting. Upgrades planned at Germantown but unsure how cups incorporated there. Looking to collect greater amounts of fiber. Optical sorters and robotic tech last couple years at Germantown. Adding sensors and integration of processing equipment and cameras and fire suppression technology. Buildout details can't be shared yet.

City of Milwaukee (Milw-Waukesha MRF), Rick Meyers: Project going on to enhance fire suppression system. Dual stream days, don't remember fires. Change in products over time. More fires than can count now, stopped counting! Growing situation nationwide at solid waste facilities. Danger for employees and equipment. Larger, regional MRFs trend is threat to overall system when a MRF stops operating. No local options to help with processing. Finishing current project to supplement sprinkler system with deluge system to cover large area, based on experience over last 7-8 years.

11:45 **Open MRF Discussion** (besides what occurred above)

Fires at MRFs: Mostly seen, anecdotally, on tipping floor and risk round balers. Most on tip floor. Fires off the trucks as well after they compact the batteries and dump out.

Please send any MRF photos, including of fires, for DNR outreach to Amy Dubruiel at amy.dubruiel@wisconsin.gov

12:00 p.m. **Thanks and Adjourn**