

NWRA Battery Legislative Updates

Provided by Jason Johns for MRF Stakeholder Meeting, August 2024

- In the 2023-25 session we got a late start on it, but still managed to get AB 987/SB 906 introduced (Rep. Kitchens and Sen. Tomczyk). These companions provided Environmental Fund money to the DNR to: (1) Prepare educational materials to inform the public about dangers of rechargeable batteries in the waste and recycling streams and about existing options for properly recycling the batteries; (2) Provide grants to RUs, Munis, Businesses, Tribal Govs, and Nonprofits to expand rechargeable battery collection and recycling operations, create new sites for collection or recycling, purchasing collection and shipping kits, equipment for handling damaged or defective batteries, and transporting batteries to third-party collection and recycling facilities; (3) Provide grants to solid waste facilities and MRFS to install, upgrade, or expanding fire detection and suppression systems.
- BOTH bills emerged from each committee unanimously, and SB 906 was unanimously passed in the Senate by voice vote. However, it was not scheduled for the Assembly floor, and it died at end of session.
- NWRA WI Chapter has been regularly meeting this summer to discuss scope of bill for next session and meeting with different stakeholders, including hearing from our sister Chapter in Illinois, MRFs, the Rechargeable Battery Association (PRBA) and Call 2 Recycling. We have taken all info gathered, discussed, and decided the path forward at this time is to pursue an EPR bill like Illinois, and include our language from last session with AB 987/SB 906. ****As in Illinois**, we will not be including embedded battery products with this bill. Because the Consumer Technology Association would oppose with fervor and kill it before it was out of the gate. As such, we will work on pushing through what we can, and then seek a Legislative Study Committee on the embedded battery product issue for Summer of 2026.
- CURRENT STATUS: Illinois EPR bill was shared with Rep. and Sen.'s offices a couple of weeks ago with direction to get to LRB for "Wisconsinizing it" and include our other language from last session as well. When we have the bill draft back, we will review it internally, likely tweak further, and when have reached a "final" draft, will begin reaching out to fellow stakeholders to share the bill draft and provide comments.