

Wisconsin Council on Recycling Meeting Notes

Friday, December 5, 2025
Via Teams/Conference Call

Council Members Present: John Anderson, David Keeling, Marty Oxman, David Pellitteri, Mark Walter, Jarrod Holter, Jerry DeMers

DNR: Jennifer Semrau, Sarah Murray, Peter Waples, Erik Flesch, Andrea Keller, Anna Quanbeck, Marcy McGrath, Amy Dubruiel

Public: Kevin Belida, Dane County; Kathy Hutter, Winnebago County; Chris Blan, Brown County; Allison Burr, Waupaca County; Laura Stevens, City of Milwaukee; Susan Schuller, Recycling Connections; Jana Suriano, SCS Engineers; Alex Pantzlaff, Outagamie County; David Lippitt, Republic Services

Note- due to the call-in/virtual ability to join the meeting, some participants may not be properly identified above; omissions or errors are not intentional.

Agenda Item	Notes
Call to Order	Meeting called to order at 10:00 a.m.
Introductions and Announcements	Council members and attendees introduced themselves.
Approval of Minutes (September 2025)	Motion made by David Keeling and seconded by Marty Oxman to approve the minutes of September 6, 2025. Motion carried (6-0).
DNR/Legislative Updates	<p>Jennifer Semrau, DNR informed the council of various DNR staffing updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retiring- John Morris, Northern region Supervisor 12/22 • New- Two new solid waste engineers started 10/6 (Travis Nickel and Jon Wagner). Both are based in Fitchburg • November interviews for E-Cycle Wisconsin coordinator; start date likely mid-January. • Recruiting for Hydrogeologist (Entry or Senior)- deadline of 12/15 • Upcoming recruitments include a Licensing, Reporting and Compliance Specialist to assist with things like annual reporting, located in Madison <p>J. Semrau, DNR informed the council of various Waste and Materials Management (WMM) program updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holiday waste media briefing 12/11 • MyWisconsinID will replace WAMS IDs for reporting • Gearing up for annual report season <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Infectious Waste (IW) released mid Jan, due 3/1 ○ Material Recovery Facility (MRF) released mid Feb, due 3/30 ○ Responsible Unit (RU) released mid Mar, due 4/30 • WI #1 in nation in fall 2025 drug takeback (53,498 lbs.) <p>Q: Is reduction of drugs a part of the drug takeback program? A: No Q: Is the program tracking what's collected? A: No, anonymous drop-off and no sorting is occurring.</p>

	<p>J. Semrau, DNR informed the council of various legislative/rulemaking updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recycling rule revision became effective July 1. For MRFs, self-certification of operation released in early Nov. Due 12/28. Overall, addressing rule questions, reviewing draft RU recycling ordinances, collecting completed ordinances, updating annual reports and inspection forms. Guidance/resources for haulers going out in next couple of weeks. J. Semrau will provide a full presentation on the recycling rule revision changes and roll-out at future meeting. • Landfill rule: Went into effect Oct. 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ License fee surcharge increases from 15 to 25 cents/ton on Jan. 1 ○ Revisions require active landfills to notify the DNR in writing within a specified time period when certain events occur, including surface and subsurface fires (even small ones), elevated temperatures and leachate spills. • Non-landfill rule: in drafting stage • E-cycle rule: in drafting stage • HW rules: adding aerosol cans as universal waste is in effect. More on this later in the agenda. <p>J. Semrau, DNR informed the council of various upcoming meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WMM Study Group 2/5 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Agenda TBD, likely virtual via Teams
<p>Introduction of Organics Waste Management Specialist and Food Waste Diversion Update</p> <p>Slides</p>	<p>Erik Flesch, DNR introduced himself to the council. E. Flesch provided an overview of the DNR’s EPA Solid Waste Infrastructure for Recycling (SWIFR) grant progress to date. (See link to slides at left.) Highlights include work on a Wisconsin Food Waste Evaluation Study and foodservice technical assistance in Brown, Dane and Milwaukee counties. Other areas covered include recent rule revisions with food waste impact, outreach and collaborations.</p> <p>Q: On the food waste study, does DNR plan to engage with contractor for implementation plan?</p> <p>A: HDR is not doing an implementation plan.</p>
<p>Recycling Excellence Award Winners</p> <p>Slides</p>	<p>J. Semrau, DNR presented on the 2025 Recycling Excellence Award (REA) winners, including a project description and pictures for each winner. (See link to slides at left.) The REAs began in 2013 focused only on RU achievement but have expanded to schools, businesses, non-profits and all municipalities. Categories include Projects & Initiatives, Overall Program, Innovation and Special Events. 2025 saw a record number of nominations and winners, which were announced in coordination with America Recycles Day (Nov. 15).</p>
<p>2024 Recycling Data Report</p>	<p>Peter Waples, DNR presented on 2024 recycling data, starting with a correction in 2023 data. (See link to slides at left.) Reported MRF tonnage fell from 2023 to 2024 by approximately 20,000 tons, primarily in the ‘all other</p>

<p>Slides</p>	<p>paper category.’ The average residual rate from MRFs that do not accept single stream recycling was 3.65% versus 14.03% from MRFs that do accept single stream. RUs saw a slight increase in reported tonnage from 2023 to 2024 of 1.3%. Overall, on a 10-year trend line, RU tonnage is remaining flat with MRF tonnage trending slightly downward.</p> <p>Q: Any known reason for material averages to be decreasing?</p> <p>A: Number of factors including container lightweighting, less paper in the form of newspapers, magazines and mail.</p> <p>Q: Does DNR focus on high residual?</p> <p>A: Yes, MRFs with higher residual are investigated to determine why. With the recycling rule revision, MRFs will be held to a maximum 20% residual rate or required to submit acceptable justification or a residual improvement plan.</p>
<p>Aerosol Cans as Universal Waste & Vapes Guidance Updates</p> <p>Slides</p>	<p>Andrea Keller, DNR provided the council a report on the new ability to manage aerosol cans as universal waste. (See link to slides at left). Universal wastes are hazardous wastes that can be managed protectively under reduced regulations. Some aerosol cans may be hazardous wastes. MRFs are advised to promote that they do not accept hazardous waste aerosol cans. A. Keller also discussed the regulatory challenges with vaping devices and provided best management practices. E-cigarettes contain nicotine and lithium batteries, making them a hazardous waste.</p> <p>Q: Do we know which MRFs take aerosol cans?</p> <p>A: This is asked in the MRF annual report as an optional question.</p>
<p>Battery Legislative Discussion/Potential Action By Council</p> <p>Letter of support on Senate Bill 703/Assembly Bill 713</p>	<p>Mark Walter, Brown County briefly summarized the battery safety/extended producer responsibility (EPR) bill introduced as Senate Bill 703/Assembly Bill 713. The bill would require producers of batteries to join a stewardship organization which would facilitate battery collection and education across the state. M. Walter said he believed the council should support the bill. M. Walter noted several issues with the proposal: it provides no money to the DNR for administration, it excludes alkalines, and the collection standard could leave many northern WI counties without collection opportunities. David Pellitteri stated that WI Manufacturers and Commerce (WMC)/ business support was needed for this bill to advance, and the proposal achieved that. D. Pellitteri agrees the council should support the bill and will remain silent on edits.</p> <p>Action: Motion made by John Anderson and seconded by Jarod Holter to support SB 703/AB 713. M. Walter tasked with drafting letter of support and directing correspondence to the legislature.</p> <p>John Anderson and Mark Walter thanked David Pellitteri and NWRA (National Waste and Recycling Association WI Chapter) for their efforts in championing the bill.</p>
<p>Recycling Market Update</p>	<p>M. Walter stated markets are stable. D. Pellitteri mentioned that NWRA recently published an op-ed on recycling markets.</p> <p>American Recycling Needs A Level Playing Field • National Waste & Recycling Association</p>
<p>Public Comment</p>	<p>No comments.</p>

<p>Other Business/2026 Meeting Dates/Topics/ Location</p>	<p>M. Walter proposed the first Friday of March, June, September and December for 2026 council meetings. J. Semrau noted that the first Friday of September falls on Labor Day weekend. J. Semrau will conduct a poll to confirm meeting dates. M. Walter suggested the March and December meetings will be virtual only, with June and September being in-person with potential tours.</p>
<p>Adjourn</p>	<p>Motion to adjourn made by Jarod Holter, seconded by John Anderson. Motion carried 7-0. Meeting adjourned at 12:04 p.m.</p>