

## Working Stakeholder Meeting on “Sustainable Materials Management in Northern Maine”

May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2015

### SUMMARY OF KEY OUTCOMES

#### Introduction

The Senator George J. Mitchell Center for Sustainability Solutions at the University of Maine has organized an interdisciplinary team of researchers with a wide array of expertise related to solid waste. Together we seek to engage with stakeholders throughout the state to identify and alleviate information gaps, provide opportunities for dialogue and to participate in the process of designing and building support for more sustainable materials management solutions in Maine. In response to stakeholder interest, the Mitchell Center is organizing a series of regional meetings this spring designed to bring together diverse stakeholders in each region to identify regionally-appropriate opportunities and needs. On May 19<sup>th</sup> three members of the Mitchell Center team travelled to Presque Isle where we met with more than 20 local stakeholders representing municipalities, waste operators, waste haulers, institutional waste generators, education and regulators.

#### What should the future of materials management in Northern Maine look like? (listed in order of greatest consensus)

- We will have increased cooperation and collaboration on materials and waste management, including processing of recyclables, organics collection, storage of recoverable and marketing
- We will have more value-added businesses that can process and utilize the recoverables locally
- We will have “the right incentives” supported locally and at the state level for both consumers to recycle AND for producers to utilize recovered materials
- We will have a strong organics program, beginning with institutional source separation
- We will have a stronger focus at the state and national level on packaging (fewer plastics, mandates that packaging materials be recoverable/recyclable)
- We will make recycling and reusing more convenient
- We will have more educated and informed citizens, closing the loop through education
- We will have regionally appropriate rules/solutions that take into account low population densities, available markets and challenges associated with transportation costs
- We will have a variety of solutions (commercial, residential, public, private) that work together

### What opportunities exist in Northern Maine to help achieve this vision?

- Share best practices and experiences among the solid waste professionals in Northern Maine
  - Build upon strong history of cooperation and collaboration by revitalizing Northern Maine Solid Waste Committee
- Strong cooperative extension and willing institutional partners from TAMC, School district, UMPI and UMFK
- To gather more information and data to evaluate possibilities for programs in Northern Maine
- Lots of nutrients, agriculture and demand for nutrients from composting programs
- To develop a solid waste plan, find grants to invest in region, and try out new policies and initiatives
- Three companies with strong leadership/potential (McCain's, Pineland, ReEnergy)
- Change the incentive structure for dealing with waste

### What needs and barriers must be addressed in order to make progress?

- We need more data/studies to help us understand the costs and benefits of consolidating recycling, waste collection and composting facilities
- We need communication/cooperation to secure funding, investment and planning
- We need to consider the extra fuel costs to get materials to market
- We need to ensure that all solutions are as cost effective as is possible
- We need more data to explore the costs and benefits of consolidation and the status quo
- We need better solutions for rigid plastics

### Are there emerging goals or programs that should be pursued?

- Reformation of Northern Maine Solid Waste Committee
  - Communication about best practices
  - Attempt to secure funds for regional environmental planner
  - Formulate realistic recycling goals for the region, plan for improvement
- Study to understand the costs and benefits of centralized collection of recyclables/compost
- Recycling in one place in county
- Formulate list of best practices
- Multi-institutional composting collaboration
- Formulate locally-appropriate recycling goals and plan to meet them
- Funds for a county-wide environmental planner