

Working Stakeholder Meeting on “Sustainable Materials Management in Greater Bangor Area”

June 29th, 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 June 29th the Mitchell Center team hosted a regional solid waste meeting in Orono at the University of Maine where we met with more than 30 local stakeholders representing municipalities, waste operators, waste haulers, institutional waste generators, regional entities, tribal nations, anaerobic digester operators, environmental organizations, waste-to-energy facilities, composters, community-action groups, landfill operators, engineering consultants, e-waste recyclers, energy consultant, and educators.

What should the future of materials management in the Greater Bangor Area look like? (listed in order of greatest consensus)

- We will have less waste; less packaging, products that are less disposable, educated citizens, and better systems for reuse
- There will be manufacturer responsibilities for materials (circular economy)
- We will put a priority on inventing strategies for capturing organics in the waste stream
- We will have more education and research for both citizens and the legislature
- We will have a diverse economy that utilizes the diverted materials
- We will look at ways to improve/adapt programs (such as the Bottle Bill) and policies (such as the Waste Hierarchy)
- We will link costs of disposal with products
- We will avoid piecemeal legislation
- We will not put the cost of solid waste disposal all on the shoulders of the municipalities
- There will be better scientific info and measurement and research into new technologies and processes

What opportunities exist in the Bangor area to help achieve this vision? (listed in order of greatest consensus)

- Diversion of organics
- Education and enforcement of solid waste policies
- Increased convenience for citizens and businesses
- Encourage local reuse markets and swap shops
- Look at where others are succeeding in addressing their solid waste challenges
- Regionalization
- Statewide Pay-As-You-Throw
 - Both effective and controversial
- Community level waste audits
- Transportation and collection synergies
- Organics disposal bans
- Redemption centers to play a larger role
- Have an entity (state level?) with interest in all levels of the waste hierarchy
 - Who can look at data unemotionally and in unbiased ways?
- Better data that would be helpful in understanding actual solid waste practices

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

- Research on what waste is produced in Maine including non-household wastes
- Choice and flow control accompanied by information on costs
- Viable funding mechanism for incentives/disincentives
 - Current incentive structure pays companies for moving and disposing of waste
- Comparative information about policies and better data
- Statewide approach to landfill siting and understanding that there will always be opposition to proposed sites
- Fees that capture materials and reflect hierarchy
- A way for residents to understand the costs of waste disposal
- More requirements for reporting data by entities that move or market materials
- High turnover in legislature

Are there emerging goals or programs that should be pursued?

- Increased information for all stakeholders
- Regional applicability and planning
- Incentivize organics removal
- Political will for policy
 - Discuss political feasibility
 - Unified message
- Make University an example for how to organize and manage waste
- Look at models elsewhere (comparative policy analysis)
- Tap into Maine's frugality



Senator George J. Mitchell Center for Sustainability Solutions

- Real-time data
- Energy and lifecycle analysis
- Recycled materials use requirements
- Keep stakeholders informed
- Mitchell Center Action Plan