

Notes
WISCONSIN COUNCIL ON RECYCLING

Friday, February 9, 2024
 Via conference call/Teams

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| <p>Council Members Present: John Anderson, Jarrod Holter, David Keeling, Marty Oxman, Mark Walter. DNR: Jennifer Semrau, Kate Strom Hiorns, Brad Wolbert, Cynthia Moore, Sarah Murray, Casey Krausensky, Peter Waples. Public: Dr. Aurora Munguia-Lopez, Chemical Upcycling of Waste Plastics; Laura Stevens, City of Milwaukee; Kathryn Hutter and Kelly Reyer, Winnebago County; Susan Schuller, Associated Recyclers of Wisconsin and Recycling Connections; Marissa Jablonski, Fresh Water Collective; Bridget Pankonin, Charter Steel. Note- due to the call-in/virtual ability to join the meeting, some participants may not be properly identified above; omission is not intentional.</p> | |
| Call to Order | Meeting called to order at 10:03 a.m. |
| Introductions and Announcements | Council members, staff and guests introduced themselves. |
| Approval of Minutes (December 2023) | Motion made by David Keeling and seconded by Jarrod Holter to approve the minutes of December 5, 2023. Motion carried (5-0). |
| Election of Officers | Motion made by John Anderson and seconded by David Keeling for the following slate of officers: Mark Walter, Chair; David Pellitteri, Vice Chair; Heidi Woelfel, Secretary. Motion carried (5-0). |
| Chemical Upcycling of Waste Plastics Slides | Dr. Aurora Munguia-Lopez, Chemical Upcycling of Waste Plastics (CUWP) provided a presentation on CUWP to the council (see link). CUWP is funded by the US Department of Energy for another 1.5 years. Casey Krausensky asked about the environmental considerations of solvent usage. A: 99.9% solvent recovery/reuse. Susan Schuller asked about the quality of the finished product compared to traditional, that plastics can only be recycled three times. A: Only one cycle from industrial plastics has been completed so far, would need to re-run material to test this. Cynthia Moore asked about feedstock (from MRFs, only certain plastics, etc.). A: Presently small scales study in a lab (3,000 tons/year). |
| DNR/Legislative Updates | Jennifer Semrau, DNR informed the council of various DNR staffing updates: New Staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emily Strom, Engineer, NE region Recruitment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organics WMS- apply by Feb. 12 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primary Duties: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Assist with developing public education and outreach efforts that inform people and businesses about ways to prevent and reduce organic waste generation ○ Assist with developing guidance and trainings and to provide technical assistance to entities wishing to manage organic waste materials |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Make contacts within the department and partner with other Wisconsin agencies and universities on advancing food waste reduction and composting project ○ Assist with preparing and managing contracts ● 2 engineers (NO/NW, NE) ● Waste Management Specialist (NO/NW) ● Licensing engineer for HW <p>Departures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cynthia Moore departing end of Feb. ● Brad Wolbert- last day Feb. 16. B. Wolbert shared departing remarks with council, thanking them for their commitment to this work. The council is a statutorily created body whose voice is important and carries weight. Recycling is a universal value in WI; everyone is interested in participates. Despite partisanship, lots of legislation has been introduced this session. Recycling is an asset and makes sense. Important issues include plastics, batteries/fires, product stewardship, food/organics, emerging recycling streams (EVs) and public education. Filling the Bureau Director position will be a priority. <p>J. Semrau, DNR informed the council of various Waste and Materials Management (WMM) program updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 2024 Annual Report season in full swing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ E-cycle, Infectious Waste (IW), and Hazardous Waste (HW) reports now open, due 3/1 ○ Material Recovery Facility (MRF) open in Feb, due 3/30 ○ Responsible Unit (RU) open in Mar, due 4/30 ● Still working to wrap up 2022 RU data (MRF data online); will report data at next council meeting ● Doing battery education/social media for National Battery Day, 2/18 ● Spring <i>Natural Resources</i> magazine will feature article on wish-cycling <p>EPA Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Funding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● State Solid Waste Infrastructure For Recycling (SWIFR) Grant (~\$550,000) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Project position to focus on food/organics waste ○ RFP for statewide food waste evaluation is out and proposals are due 3/4 at 2 pm; budget \$188,000 <p>Goals of study:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identify geographic and structural areas of organics waste generation and gaps in current organics waste management infrastructure relating to food. ○ Assess statutes and administrative code for opportunities to promote food waste prevention activities (source reduction, feed people, feed animals, composting/anaerobic digestion, landspreading). ○ Evaluate food waste management options in Wisconsin, including options throughout the food waste reduction hierarchy/scale. ○ Develop a plan that incorporates strategies and policy options for sustainably managing food and food-related organics and meeting the DNR Climate Action goal. |
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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Analyze the economic costs and benefits of implementing the food waste management plan. ○ Design data collection, measurement and analysis methods to track progress towards the state’s food waste reduction and diversion goal. <p>J. Semrau, DNR informed the council of various upcoming events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Feb. 21, WI Beverage Association Annual meeting (DNR speaking) ● Feb. 28-Mar. 1, WI Integrated Resource Management Conference (WIRMC)- DNR exhibiting, speaking ● May 2, WMM Study Group meeting <p>J. Semrau, DNR informed the council of various legislative/rulemaking updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● NR 500 Landfill and solid waste fees rulemaking- next external advisory committee meeting is Feb. 13 at 10:30 a.m. Attendance is open to all. The main discussion will be related to economic impacts of the rule elements. Next step will be finalizing documents and the economic impact comment period in late spring/early summer. Any questions or comments to share, please contact Kate Strom Hiorns kathrynm.stromhiorns@wisconsin.gov. ● DNR asked to review and comment on not-yet introduced paint extended producer responsibility (EPR) bill, similar to an IL bill which passed last year. ● AB 492 related to owner financial responsibility (OFR) options for municipalities is still active in the legislature. ● Recycling rules and legislative discussion later on agenda. |
| <p>Legislative Discussion/ Action by Council</p> <p>Slides</p> <p>Letter of Support</p> | <p>Sarah Murray, DNR presented a summary of Senate Bill 866/Assembly Bill 958. Slides at left. Bill draws from recommendations of E-cycle reports. Bill updates materials under the program, fees and manufacturer’s formula for recycling targets. Presently electronic recycling targets are based on 80% of sales. This amount was too low during years that heavy CRTs were being collected, but lighter weight devices sold, but too high recently due to COVID sales. The bill would base the manufacturer’s target on material recycled. Mark Walter asked if DNR would like to see any changes in the bill. S. Murray stated that it would have been preferable to have happened last year (as if passed, implementation will be after the program year has started), but it will be positive in the long run.</p> <p>J. Semrau presented a summary of SB 876/AB 935 (removes prohibition from the department to spend recycling appropriation funds on education in an existing appropriation), SB 906/AB 987 (creates two grant programs, one for recycling of batteries and the other for fire detection and suppression systems at solid waste facilities and materials recovery facilities; also removes prohibition from the department to spend recycling appropriation funds on education and requires DNR educate on proper battery recycling) and SB 721/no AB version (creates food waste reduction grant program administered by Dept. of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection). David Keeling asked if SB 876 would affect Responsible Units (RUs) by reducing RU grants. A: No. D. Keeling asked about the historical context of the restriction. Kate Strom Hiorns said the prohibition was added back in the</p> |

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| | <p>1990's and today's staff are unsure why. D. Keeling remarked that the restriction is akin to operating with one hand tied behind one's back. On SB 906, M. Walter asked why there were so few co-sponsors. J. Semrau indicated that in an effort to introduce the bill as quickly as possible (maximize time remaining in the session), the bill authors did not send the bill for co-sponsors prior to introduction. M. Walter indicated the Associated Recyclers of WI (AROW) formerly supported SB 866 and SB 906.</p> <p>Motion by John Anderson and seconded by Marty Oxman to support SB 866/AB 958, SB 876/AB 935, SB 906/AB 987, and SB 721 and draft a letter of support. Motion carried (5-0). Letter of support at left.</p> |
| <p>Recycling Administrative Rule Revision Update</p> <p>Slides</p> | <p>J. Semrau, DNR presented slides on the progress of the recycling administrative rule revision, summarizing results of the public hearing and seeking council input on individual subscription service and owner financial responsibility (OFR) for MRFs (see link to slides at left). Jarrod Holter suggested that a lot of Responsible Units (RUs) which use individual subscription service are smaller and trying to pass along costs without raising taxes. Is Milwaukee worried that subscription service will be implemented in Milwaukee? A: One community in SE WI does use this, and Milwaukee may think this isn't fair and could be a slippery slope that others would follow (and lose integrity of state's recycling program). J. Holter said it would be difficult for RUs to show 100% documentation of subscriptions. However, requiring additional reporting or greater role from RU in implementation are good ideas to implement. On OFR for MRFs, M. Walter said limiting materials on-site is very market dependent, and it would be difficult to meet that requirement. J. Semrau asked about any concerns from municipalities that have MRFs in your area without OFR? J. Holter said it is a concern from a municipal standpoint, would charge back to assess the landowner if possible, but there is some risk out there for any business or commercial entity – manufacturing facility, etc. J. Semrau said the rule goes to Natural Resources Board, then for governor's approval, then submitted to Legislature for two committees' review. DNR's goal is to have rule supported by the industry, but also need to consider the OFR benefit to the state and taxpayers. David Keeling asked if OFR was required by a MRF operator, would it reduce their insurance rates? A: Perhaps it depends on what they are processing and what might be left behind at a MRF. MRFs would be setting aside OFR funds for materials typically without value and residuals. Unsure about insurance impact. NWRA indicated it could increase insurance rates but unsure what that is based on. J. Holter indicated they had a junk dealer in his community from 1940s to 1975 that processed batteries and threw them out the back door which basically created superfund site. These types of activities are out there. D. Keeling stated his previous employer ceased operations, the landlord seized all the appliances and equipment because of unpaid rent. Cynthia Moore clarified that OFR for MRFs is only for those collecting recyclables from RUs. Casey Krausensky asked if anyone was familiar with municipalities or counties with any OFR requirements for industries. No one had heard of this type of thing at the local level.</p> |
| <p>Council of Council Activities</p> | <p>Mark Walter, Brown County/Council Chair provided a draft report to the council and requested each council review and provide comments by Mar. 31. J. Semrau will send an email to the council and collect feedback.</p> |

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| <p>Recycling Market Updates</p> <p>Recyclable Paper Values</p> <p>Recyclable Container Values</p> | <p>M. Walter, Brown County/Council Chair shared paper and container values (see links at left). Markets are generally up or steady. M. Oxman said month over month, aluminum, mixed paper/fiber and OCC (old corrugated cardboard) are up, while tin is flat. Movement/transportation is a challenge. D. Keeling reported that Nippon Steel is buying US Steel. Susan Schuller appreciated the graphs and noted that recycling is only in the news when markets are low, rarely when markets are high.</p> |
| <p>Recycling Compliance Issues</p> | <p>J. Semrau, DNR said new recycling compliance issues received since the last meeting include:</p> <p>Complaints or alleged compliance issues at multi-family properties or non-residential properties in Appleton. (Appleton does not have more compliance issues than other areas of the state; Outagamie Co [RU] proactively cc'ing DNR on compliance letters.)</p> |
| <p>Public Comment</p> | <p>None.</p> |
| <p>Other Business</p> | <p>John Anderson motioned to give Mark Walter authority to send a letter of support on behalf of the council (not just draft) regarding the legislative proposals previously discussed. Seconded by David Keeling. Motion carried (5-0).</p> |
| <p>2024 Meeting Schedule/Topics/ Locations</p> | <p>M. Walter suggested the next meeting be in May/June in-person with a tour. Thereafter, a Sept. meeting, possibly in-person with a tour and in Dec. a virtual meeting.</p> |
| <p>Adjourn</p> | <p>Meeting adjourned at 12:08 p.m.; motioned by David Keeling and seconded by Marty Oxman. Motion carried (5-0).</p> |