



PRESENTED BY NAUGATUCK VALLEY COG  
AND SOUTH CENTRAL REGIONAL COG

# Waste Reduction at CT Transfer Stations

IMPLEMENTING FOOD WASTE DIVERSION AND PAY-  
AS-YOU-THROW AT YOUR TRANSFER STATION

JANUARY 10, 2024

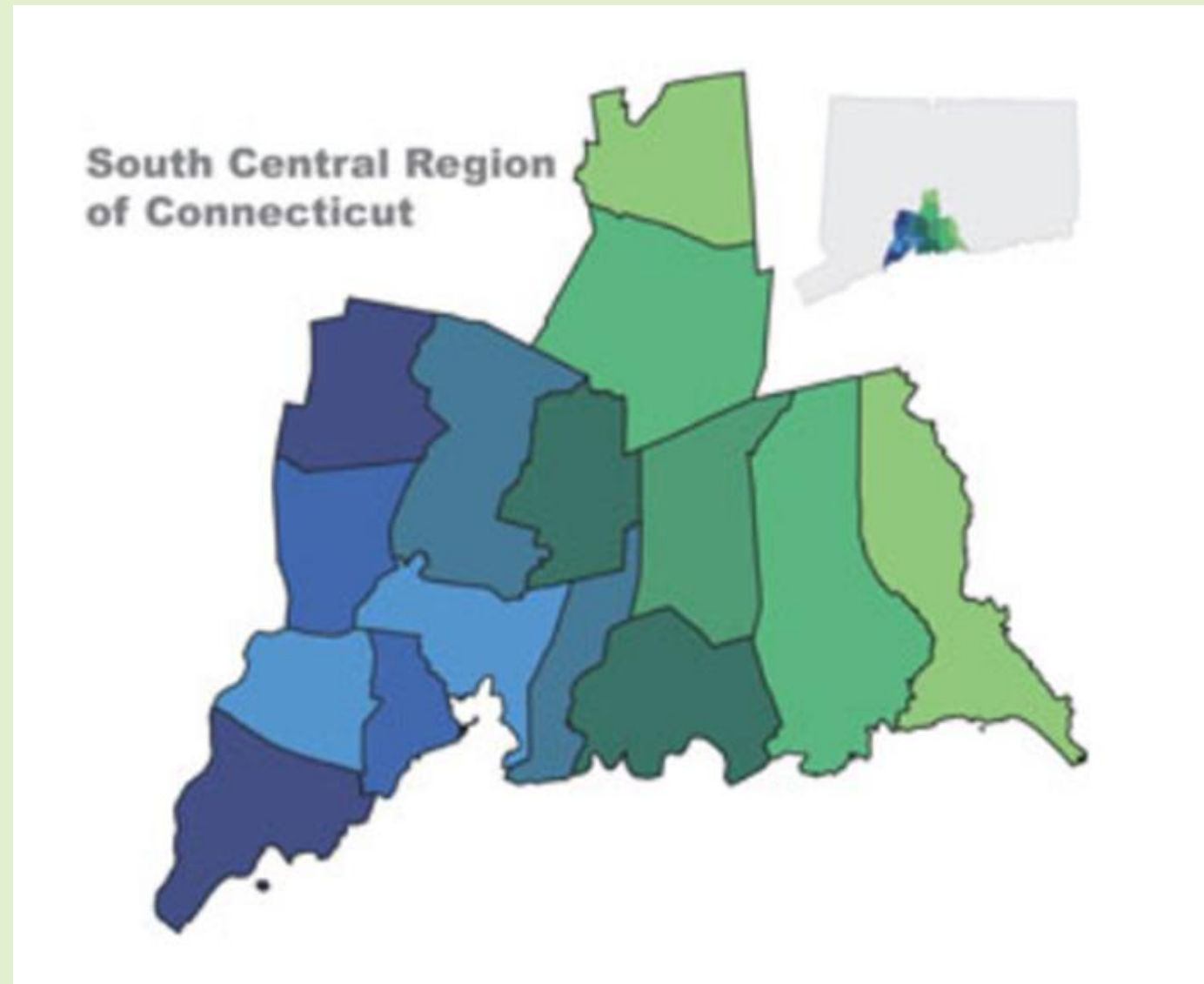


# Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments

- 19 municipalities in west-central CT
- Significant concern with waste management issues, from both financial and environmental perspectives
- Regular engagement in state-level waste planning
- NVCOG provided outreach and educational support for 4 **Sustainable Materials Management grants** in our region

# South Central Regional Council of Governments

- 15 municipalities in South Central Connecticut
- 570,000 people or about 1/6 of the States population
- Significant concern with waste management issues, from both financial and environmental perspectives
- Regular engagement in state-level waste planning
- SCRCOG provided outreach and educational support for 4 SMM grants in our region



# Why **Organics Collection** and **Pay-As-You-Throw?**



- Two of the most impactful & practical strategies for waste reduction in terms of the numbers.
- Can be implemented locally, rather than requiring an act of the legislature.
- We have CT-specific data and wisdom on implementing these two measures thanks to the **SMM grant program**, funded by CT DEEP.
  - Throughout the pilots, we have found that organics diversion works especially well at transfer stations.

# Organics Collection

“ ORGANICS PROVIDE THE LARGEST OPPORTUNITY TO INCREASE CONNECTICUT’S WASTE DIVERSION. ”

CT DEEP COMPREHENSIVE MATERIALS MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

- CT DEEP estimates that **40.3%** of the state’s MSW stream consists of “Compostable Organics.”
  - Includes food scraps, yard waste, certain paper products, etc.
- Separating organics for composting is a **well-understood** and established practice that resonates with individuals.



# Organics Collection: Considerations

- Where will we send our collected organics?
  - Should we compost on-site?
- Who will haul the collected organics?
- Where will we situate our collection bin at the Transfer Station?
- What measures will we take to prevent odors and/or attracting wildlife?
- Will we require certain type of bags (or no bags at all) to be used?
- How will we fund this service?
- How will we educate the residents about this service?
- Will this be mandatory or voluntary?

*Be sure to check with CT DEEP permitting staff before making any changes*

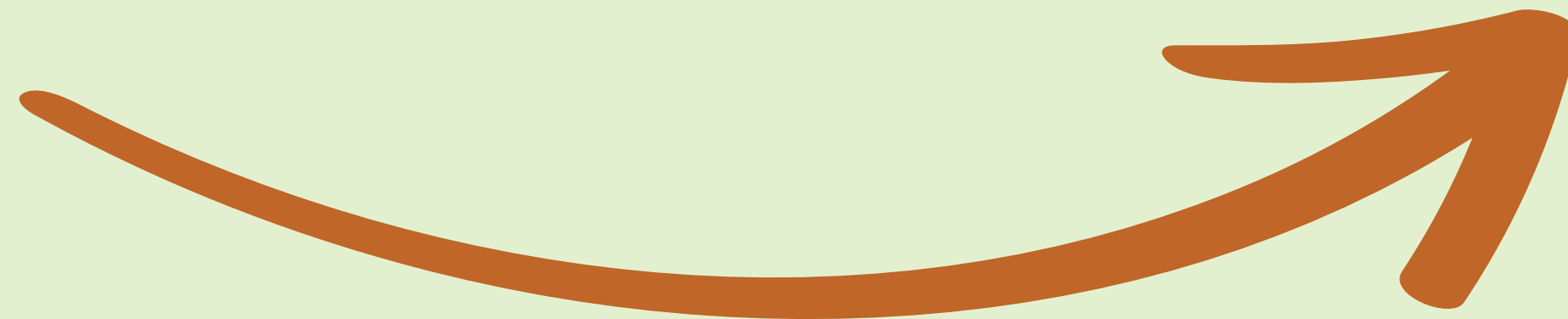
# Pay-As-You-Throw

*Also called “SMART” or “Unit Based Pricing”*

Right now, most transfer station users pay for waste disposal through their taxes and a flat-fee annual sticker. The amount they pay is not connected to the amount of waste they produce.

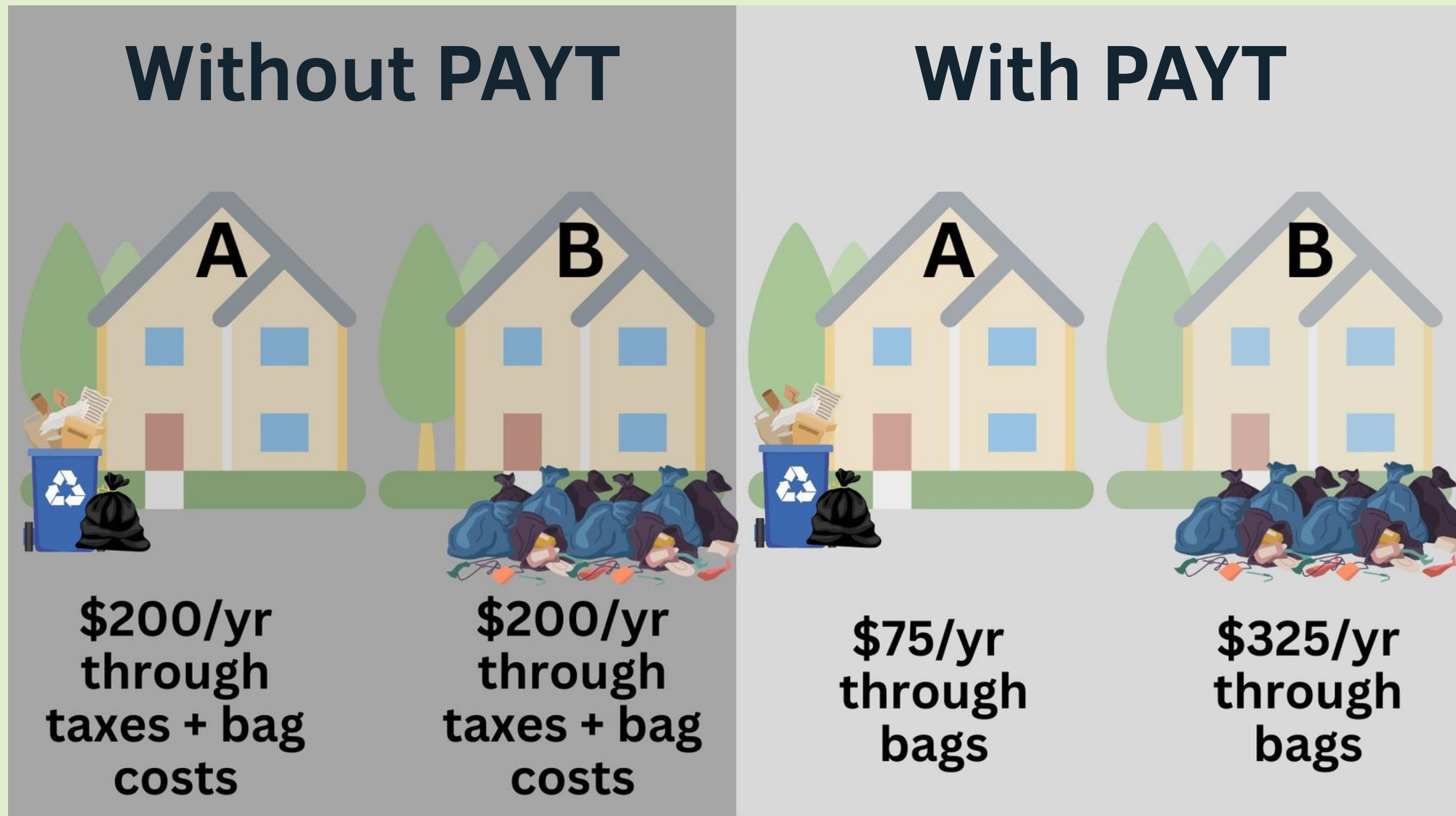


In a PAYT system, the cost of disposal is built into the cost of the bag. This connects the amount of money spent to the amount of waste produced.



This “price signal” motivates residents to change behavior and produce less waste.

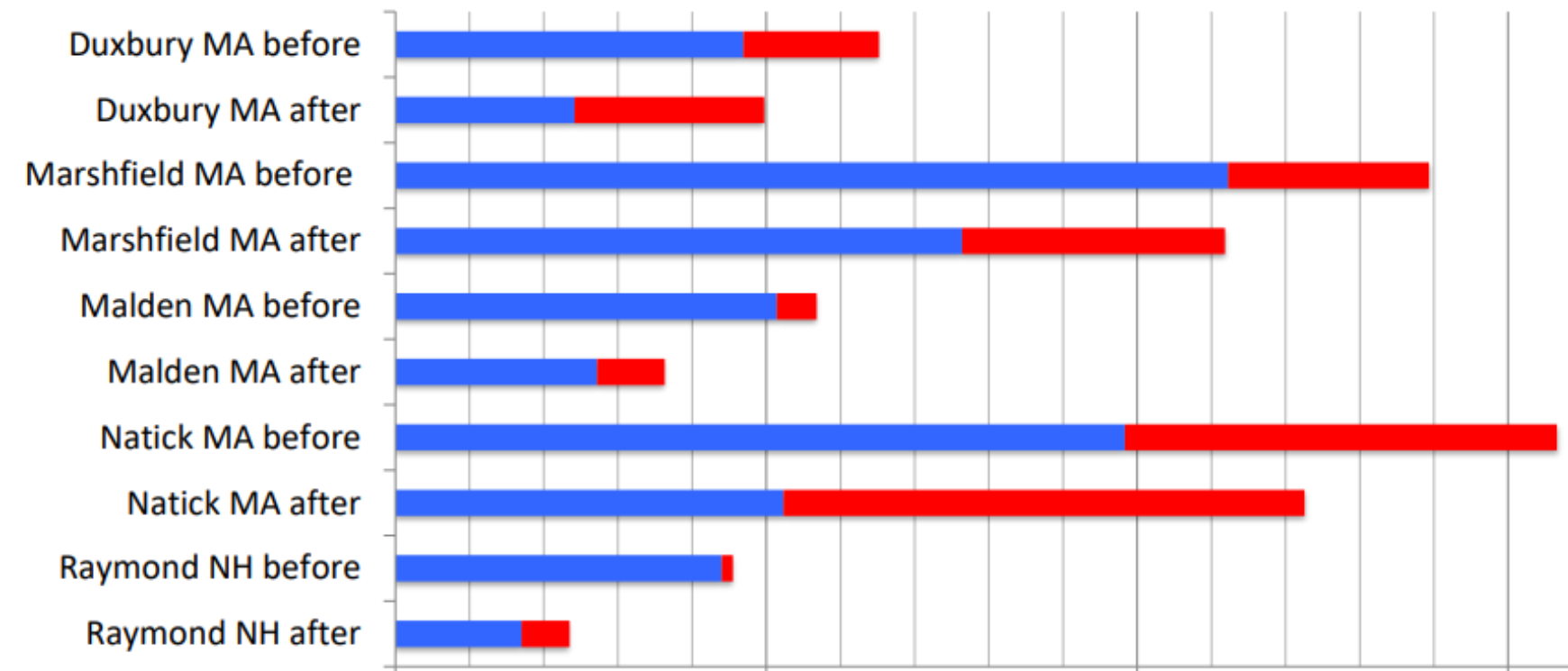
# Fairness and Transparency in Waste Costs



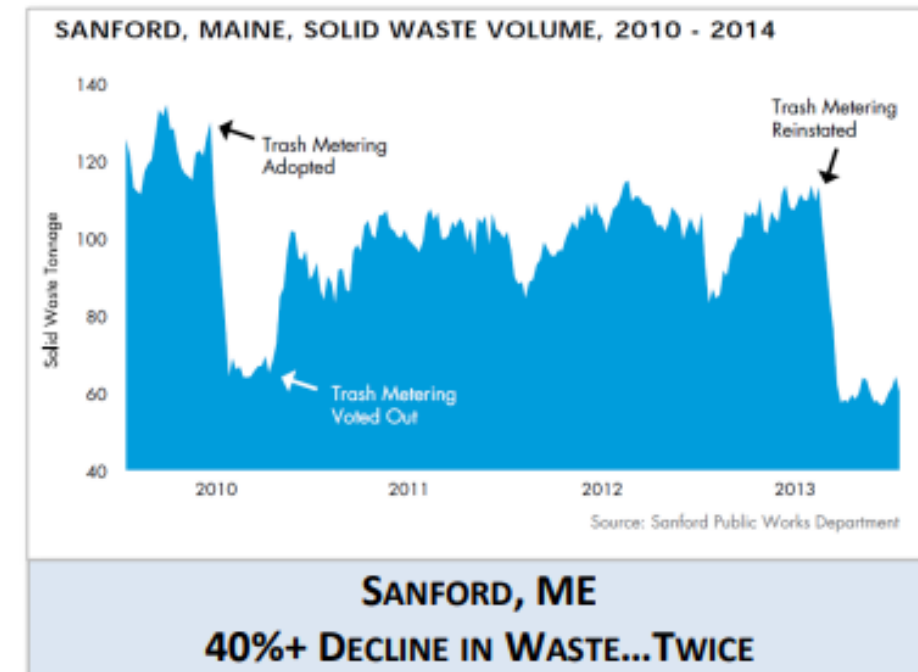
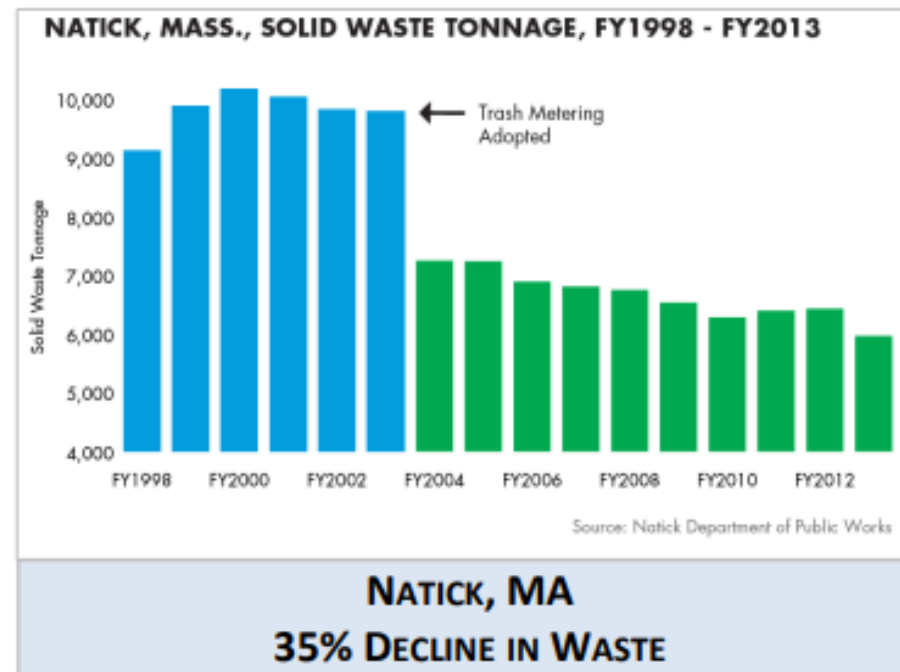
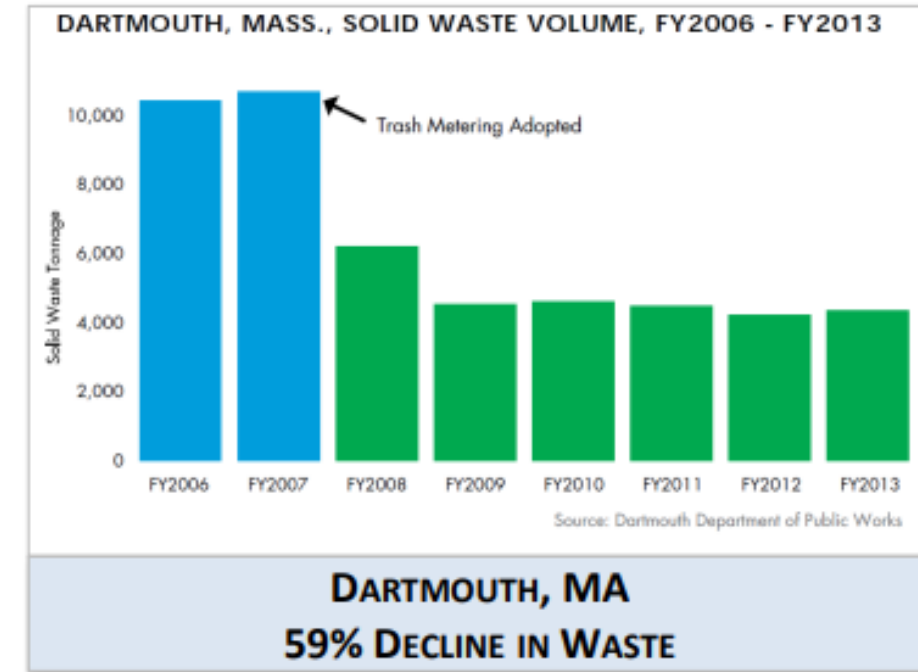
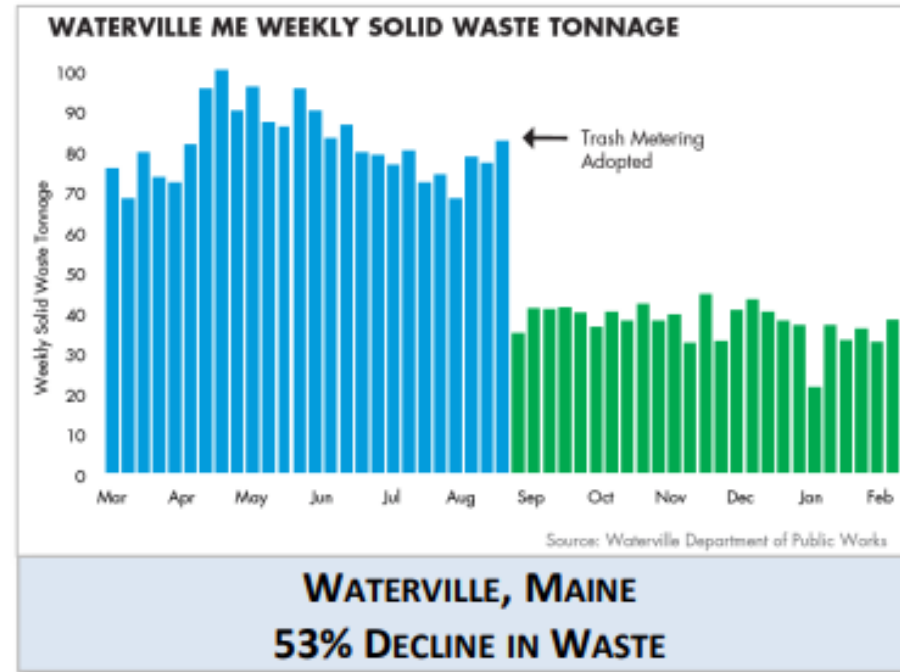
*This graphic is an example and is not meant to indicate actual costs estimates.*



# We've watched PAYT succeed in our backyard for many years



■ Waste ■ Commodity Recycling



## Vermont's Universal Recycling Law

**Unit-Based Pricing or "Pay-As-You-Throw":** All Vermont towns had to require waste collectors to charge for trash based on its volume or weight. Similar to paying for the amount of electricity used instead of a flat fee, people in Vermont can pay less if they produce less trash.

# PAYT: Considerations

- How will we educate residents about the new program?
- How will we gather baseline data to gauge the effectiveness of the program?
- If we use town-branded bags (as most PAYT programs do)...
  - What size should they be?
  - Where will they be stocked?
  - How much should we charge?
- Should we reduce/eliminate our TS sticker fee?
- Where should the \$ savings be directed to?
- Will we give away any free bags during launch?
- How will this impact low-income households; should we have a voucher/discount option?
- How will we monitor or enforce the program?
- What penalty should exist for noncompliance?



Our panelists will have some insights to share on these topics!

# SMM Grants

*Towns across CT have been piloting these two strategies over the past year*

Pilot Program	# of Weeks of Data	Collection Type	*Clean Food Capture Rate (prior week)	Food Scraps Captured (cumulative lbs)	Contamination Rate (prior week)	Waste Reduction	Curbside Diversion (Recycling + Food Scraps) Increase
Ansonia	30	Co-Collection	15%	234,758	9%	17%	44%
Deep River	30	Drop Off	43%	79,840	0.6%	19%	36.2%
Middletown	39	Co-Collection	15%	103,110	15%	N/A	N/A
Seymour	26	Co-Collection	20.1%	17,930	13%	N/A	N/A
Stonington	30	Separate Collection	44%	307,100	1%	10%	8%
West Haven	38	Co-Collection	12%	495,858	19%	9%	32%
Woodbury	33	Drop Off	23%	62,520	2%	12%	17.4%
West Hartford	24	Separate Collection	62%	68,760	2%	N/A	N/A
Middlebury	12	Drop Off	33%	23,840	0.5	8%	11%
Meriden	9	Co-collection	4%	420	1%	N/A	N/A

*Data provided by Waste Zero to CT DEEP*



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**Voluntary** program capturing so much food waste

Stunningly low contamination rates!

Considerable waste tonnage reduction

Woodbury	33	Drop Off	23%	62,520	2%	12%	17.4%
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Middlebury	12	Drop Off	33%	23,840	0.5	8%	11%
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# Other Waste Reduction Measures for Consideration



- Maintain a **swap-shop** where people can drop off used items for others to take.
  - No extra permitting necessary!
- Partner with nonprofit or for-profit companies to site **donation bins** at the transfer station. Ex: clothing/textile, toys, books, even eye glasses.
- Erect easy-to-understand “what’s in, what’s out” **recycling signage**.
- Inform residents of household **hazardous waste collections** and other diversion opportunities, like tag sales & paper shredding events.

# Implementing Waste Reduction at a Transfer Station

## Pros

- Higher engagement
- Guaranteed audience for tabling
- Attendants can function as educators, enforcers
- Sense of community & trust



## Cons

- Site constraints
- Staffing limitations
- Changing requirements / fees / protocols could push residents to private haulers

# Panel Discussion

Our moderator will pose 10 questions to our panelists and invite discussion among them.

If the audience has questions, please put them in the chat; the panelists will address audience questions at the end.



# Our Panelists



**Linda Cernik**

Program Director  
Northern Berkshire, MA



**Jill Senior**

Director of Solid Waste  
& Recycling  
Stonington, CT



**Emily Sumner**

Administrative Supervisor  
of Public Works  
Brewster, MA





## Topic: Physical Transfer Station Setup

Question: How is your transfer station situated in terms of collecting trash, recyclables, food scraps, yard waste, electronics, etc.? What works well and what doesn't?



# Spotlight: Brewster Transfer Station



Photo courtesy of Emily Sumner



# Spotlight: Stonington Transfer Station



Photo courtesy of Jill Senior





## **Topic:** Collecting Food Scraps

**Question:** To what extent are odors and wildlife an issue when collecting food scraps at the transfer station? If you've come across particular challenges, how did you solve them?

# Spotlight: Town of Williamstown Organics Collection



Photos courtesy of Linda Cernik



## Topic: Bags

**Question:** One way to implement a PAYT program is with town-branded bags. Can you describe how your bag system works - where do residents buy them, how much do they cost, and what sizes are there?



# Spotlight: Tags as an Alternative to Town-Branded Bags



Photos courtesy of Linda Cernik



**Topic:** Complaints, Enforcement, Penalties

**Question:** If your PAYT or organics program is mandatory, how do you enforce it? What penalties exist for non-compliant residents, and is it common that residents fail to comply?

**Followup:** Have you seen residents switch to private haulers after PAYT was enacted at the transfer station?





## **Topic:** Equity

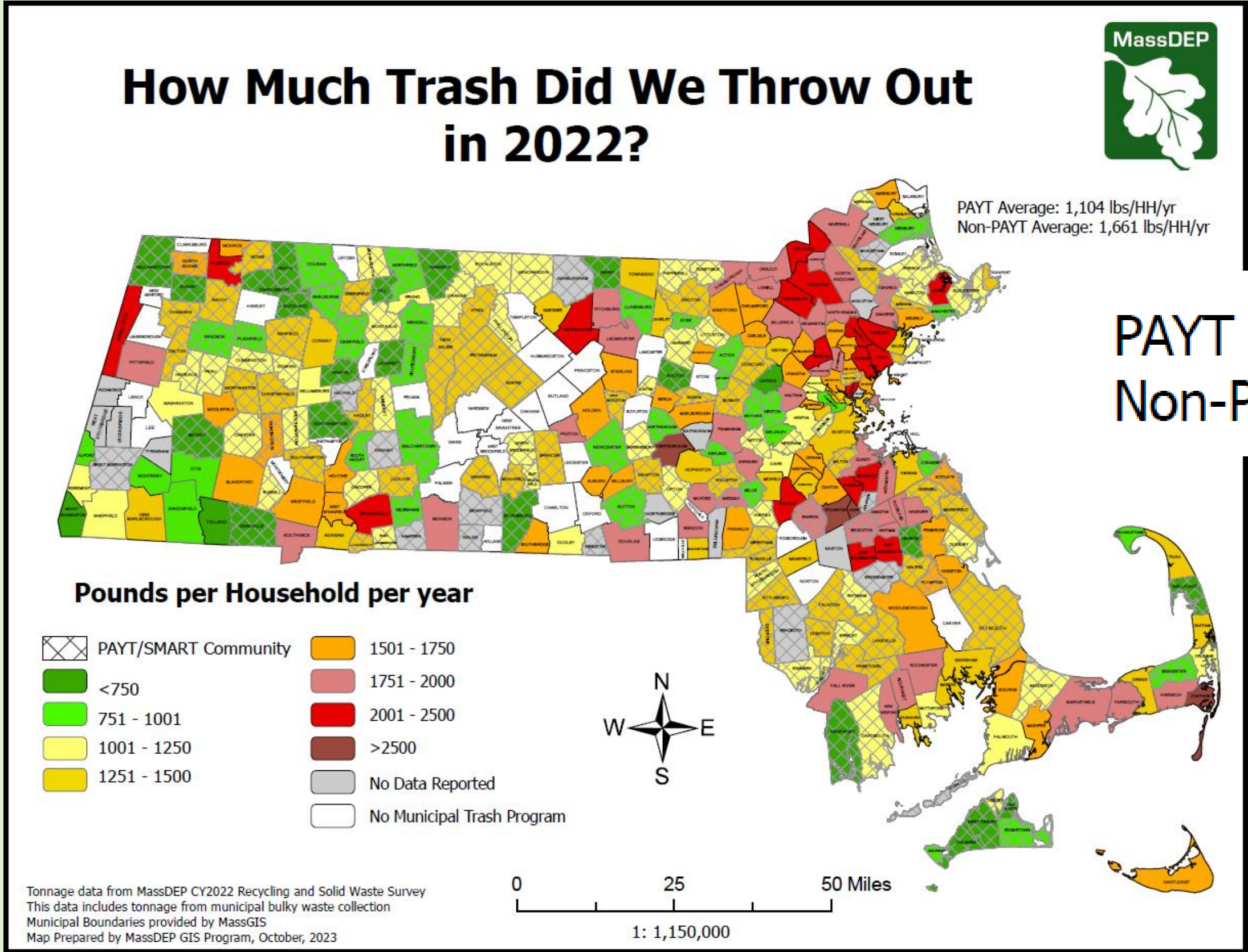
**Question:** What, if any, provisions exist in your program to accommodate residents living on low incomes or residents experiencing poverty? To what extent do you have residents expressing that they are unable to afford bags, and how have you addressed this issue?



## **Topic:** Effectiveness

**Question:** Do you consider your program(s) to be effective at reducing waste and saving taxpayer money? How do you quantify or track their impact?

# Spotlight: Trash per Household in PAYT vs. Non-PAYT Munis



PAYT Average: 1,104 lbs/HH/yr  
Non-PAYT Average: 1,661 lbs/HH/yr

Image courtesy of Linda Cernik





## **Topic:** Launching a New Program

**Question:** Getting a PAYT or organics program started can seem like a daunting task. Why did your community decide to implement these programs? What lessons learned can you share from when you first launched (or wisdom that you've learned along the way)?



## **Topic:** Education of Residents

**Question:** How do you communicate with residents regarding your program(s)? For instance, if someone new moves to town, do you have a procedure to get them up to speed?

# Spotlight: Brewster Signage



Photos courtesy of Emily Sumner





**Topic:** Waste Reduction - Beyond PAYT & Organics

**Question:** What other waste reduction measures have you implemented at your transfer station?

# Spotlight: Donation Bins, Swap Shop at Brewster



Photos courtesy of Emily Sumner



# Spotlight: Williamstown Clothing Box



Photo courtesy of Linda Cernik



# Spotlight: NexTrex Plastic Film Recycling



**RECYCLE BEYOND THE BAG**

Recycle your household bags & wrap into Trex's Earth-friendly composite decking and railing!

**FROM THE STORE**

- ✓ Produce bags
- ✓ Store bags
- ✓ Ice bags

**FROM YOUR PANTRY**

- ✓ Ziploc® & other reclosable bags
- ✓ Cereal box liners
- ✓ Case overwrap
- ✓ Bread bags

**FROM YOUR FRONT DOOR**

- ✓ Newspaper sleeves
- ✓ Dry cleaning bags
- ✓ Bubble wrap
- ✓ Plastic e-commerce mailers

**NexTrex**  
NexTrex.com 540-542-6930

RECYCLED IN AMERICA



Photos courtesy of Jill Senior





**Topic:** Advice

**Question:** Any other advice or thoughts before we open the floor to questions?

# Questions and Comments from Participants

Please use the raise hand feature and wait to be recognized,  
or put your question/comment in the chat. Thank you!





# Presenter Contact Info

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