

CCSMM Comments

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To: DEEP RecyclingProgram

MiddletownCommentsCCSMM.pdf

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Hi there,

Sorry these are late – so much to do, not enough time. I wasn't totally sure if municipalities are supposed to submit comments this way, but figured it was an opportunity to offer some input.

Thanks,

Kim

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she/her/hers

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Dear Co-Chairs Laura Francis and Matt Knickerbocker,

Thank you for taking on the challenge of coordinating efforts of the CCSMM and thank you for the opportunity to submit remarks on the different categories. Please let me know if you have any questions or if I can help in any way. I have worked as the Recycling Coordinator since 1991 and have tried to initiate many different source reduction, repair, recycling and composting programs, some successful and some not so successful. The consistent challenge always is to provide stable funding and adequate resources.

I feel we need to look at solid waste management differently and consider new ways to manage, and fund the management, of this material.

I am looking forward to discussing ideas and opportunities with this group. I am hoping the State will take a leadership role in advocating for these ideas. I don't have all the answers. I do have some ideas and comments as to what the problems are.

Organics

- CT needs to encourage more community composting and make it easier to compost food waste at registered leaf composting sites and transfer stations. More local composting will increase participation and help with transportation costs.
- How can CT get to where organics separation is just the normal practice? I would like to learn more about how NY and VT passed their organics laws and figure out how to slowly expand CT's law. What are the steps that need to be taken?
- CT needs some sort of financial incentive or funding program to help transition to organics collection. Organics, in addition to trash, is always more expensive. Maybe as the system adjusts, the price will go down, but you are still paying for a separate collection of a different material. The expense of the collection and transportation of organics needs to be addressed.

EPR

- Yes! EPR for packaging will address the instability of curbside recycling. Since this material is such a large part of the waste stream it must be addressed. Developing an EPR program for packaging will offer stable funding and resources to increase recycling, reduce contamination and get manufacturers involved in the end life of their materials. It may also spur invocation in the packaging to materials that would be easier and less expensive to recycle.
- I would like to hear from some areas in Canada that have an EPR program for packaging.
- EPR is needed for other hard to recycle materials – cylinders, HHW, smoke detectors, and tires. Middletown participates in the four EPR programs available in the state and have found them to be helpful solutions.
- CT's Bottle Bill needs to be improved. At the very least, this group should support increasing the handling fee and the deposit and adding other glass materials, such as nips, liquor and wine bottles. Escheats from the bottle bill program should go directly to diversion and recycling programs, not the General Fund.

Increase Recycling

There's so much that needs to be done in this category, it is impossible to write it all down. Here are some initial thoughts:

- CT should increase minimum content laws similar to Break Free from Plastic Pollution ACT.
- CT needs to increase the reuse system. Offer grants for reusable take out containers or coffee cups. Encourage more reuse centers to open up and increase promotion of the reuse centers. Offer incentives to use reuse centers. One idea to get stable funding is to add a manufacturer tax on single use disposables to pay for grants and discourage the use of disposables. 50% of the money could go to municipalities for outreach and litter clean-up and 50% to build reuse infrastructure.
- CT should ban expanded polystyrene for food products containers.
- We need better labeling and education on compostable and biodegradable products and bioplastics. These items contaminate the recycling stream and are very confusing to the public.
- CT should develop and require formal curriculum in schools for sustainable waste management and climate change. Part of that education should include instruction on local solid waste programs. Children can be most effective in bringing the message home to families.
- All of these programs need stable funding. In the 1990's CT had grants for communities, but now no state grants available. How do other states offer grant funding to municipalities (MA and NY, others?) I would like to hear from them. EPR can help with certain segments of the waste stream, but CT needs more of a plan to fund sustainable materials management efforts. Efforts are stagnant in the State and part of it is because there's very limited funding to move programs forward and no consensus on how to keep those programs financially stable.

- CT's recycling program is based on the requirement that the hauler will communicate with the town (the enforcer) about customers who are violating recycling laws. However, for various reasons, haulers do not report violations. This is a breakdown in the system which needs to be addressed. The current system is not working. We should look at towns in other states that have effective enforcement programs and see what they do and how they fund those programs. .
- We haven't talked about the larger items – demo and construction debris. I would like to see incentives or legislation to require deconstruction. The State needs to develop markets for used building materials for reuse. I would like to discuss this with someone from MA to talk about their program.

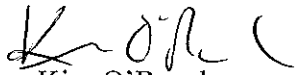
Unit Based Pricing

Considering the efforts that DEEP has made in the last several or more years, I think the State needs to take a different approach. I am not exactly sure what that approach is, but municipalities are not going to take this step on their own and the state needs to take some leadership to require it and/or offer incentives that are hard to refuse.

Massachusetts has 155 communities using PAYT. How did that happen?

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment. Please let me know if you have questions.

Sincerely,



Kim O'Rourke

Middletown Recycling Coordinator

