



THE STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

Solid Waste Working Group

Karen Ebel, Chair

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Minutes of April 22, 2022

Solid Waste Working Group

Room 208C

29 Hazen Drive, Concord, NH 03302

Members Present: Chair Karen Ebel, Reagan Bissonnette, Brian Patnoe, Adam Clark, Jim Malley, Freda Paris, Sen. James Gray, Matt Hughes, Steve Poggi, Marc Morgan, Duncan Watson, Michael Wimsatt, Benjamin Piche (alternate for S. Smith), Rep. Howard Pearl, Eric Steinhauser

Members Present Remotely¹: Lynn Rubinstein

Members Not Present: Colin Kelly, Greg Leahey

Call to Order:

Chair Ebel called the meeting to order at 10:33 AM

Approval of Minutes:

Minutes of the March 25, 2022 meeting were approved without a motion or second, all were in favor.

Reports from Subcommittees:

Following meetings of the three subcommittees, the full SWWG convened. Chair Ebel asked whether it was beneficial to have the subcommittees meet immediately before the regular meeting of the full group, to which there seemed to be general agreement. Chair Ebel suggested that going forward, the subcommittees will meet at 9:00 AM before regular meetings, and that meetings will be held monthly. The group agreed that holding monthly meetings would be warranted due to the work that still needs to be done. Chair Ebel also asked Michael Nork of NHDES when he expects the department will have a draft outline of the Solid Waste Management Plan for the SWWG to review. Mr. Nork indicated that he hoped to have a draft outline ready for the next SWWG meeting on May 27. Individuals from each of the subcommittees then reported on what they discussed during their meetings.

Waste Reduction & Management of Difficult Wastes Subcommittee – Steve Poggi reported that the subcommittee broke their discussion into two topics: (1.) waste reduction, and (2.) management of problem wastes. With regard to waste reduction, their discussion centered on the need for education and outreach – information could be provided by waste service providers,

¹ Remote attendance necessary due to logistical considerations

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NHDES, communities and/or other organizations. Target audiences could be residents, businesses, solid waste facility operators, schools. With regard to problematic wastes, the subcommittee discussed various categories, including contaminated soils, asbestos, bulky wastes (e.g. mattresses, pallets, carpeting), sheetrock, and sludge/biosolids.

Recycling & Composting Subcommittee – Reagan Bissonnette reported that the subcommittee discussed pay-as-you-throw (PAYT) programs, challenges promoting recycling in multi-family housing, availability of markets and infrastructure for recycling and composting, encouraging regional cooperation between municipalities, managing food waste via composting and anaerobic digestion, disposal capacity in New Hampshire and how to limit disposal of out-of-state waste, funding opportunities for recycling and solid waste management (e.g. disposal surcharges). In consideration of the disposal reduction goal in RSA 149-M:2, which is based on weight, the subcommittee discussed prioritizing attention to recovery of the biggest, heaviest things that end up in landfills or incinerators (e.g. food waste, C&D, paper, glass, textiles). The subcommittee reviewed NH’s existing disposal bans and inquired if additional disposal bans might be warranted. They also touched on the topic of extended producer responsibility (EPR) policies, which have been employed in other states. For their next meeting the subcommittee plans to prioritize materials based their relative proportion/tonnage, and identify strategies/recommendations to address recovery of such materials (including “low-hanging fruit” strategies as well as harder-to-accomplish approaches).

Alternate Waste Management Technologies Subcommittee – Jim Malley reported that the subcommittee discussed methods such as anaerobic digestion, landfill “mining,” waste-to-energy facilities. The subcommittee discussed the need to focus on technologies that are ready for the “here and now.” Duncan Watson also suggested possibly having his brother Rob Watson present at a future SWWG meeting on a technology promoted by his firm, Upland Road. The subcommittee echoed the prior subcommittee’s prioritization of materials based on their relative proportion of the waste stream. They also discussed the need to make sure that any technologies are fully-vetted to avoid potential for future environmental hazards, and that the costs of innovative technologies are often very expensive, so funding and incentive mechanisms (e.g., energy credits) may be important.

Presentation – Landfills 101:

Marc Morgan presented basic information about the waste stream and landfill disposal to provide a baseline understanding for all SWWG members. Mr. Morgan discussed how the waste stream has evolved in recent years (less paper, more plastic, etc.), and how we manage/dispose of waste has also changed (e.g., rise of single stream recycling, lined landfills instead of unlined dumps). Mr. Morgan also provided some details on operation of the City of Lebanon’s landfill facility.

Following Mr. Morgan’s presentation, there were questions from the group regarding status of closed unlined landfills across the state, siting landfills next to rivers, lifespan and durability of landfill liner systems, and factors affecting decomposition of wastes and leachate generation within a landfill.

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A copy of the presentation is available on the SWWG website.

Updates/Discussion:

Rep. Howard Pearl provided a brief legislative update, highlighting that HB 1049 (establishing a study committee) is scheduled for a Senate hearing on April 26. Rep. Pearl noted that SB 367 (related to “Advanced Recycling”) is with the House Environment & Agriculture Committee, and has been assigned to a subcommittee for further consideration. Rep. Pearl also referenced a summary of current solid waste bills compiled by NRRA: <https://www.nrrarecycles.org/news/nh-solid-waste-legislation-updates-2022-session>

Information on specific bills can be obtained by searching by bill number and session year on the General Court’s Website: http://gencourt.state.nh.us/bill_status/legacy/bs2016/

Chair Ebel asked Mike Wimsatt to provide a brief update on grant funding expected to be made available via EPA through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL). Director Wimsatt indicated that the details are still being worked out by EPA, but that more should be known by late 2022. Based on preliminary information, it appears EPA will make funding available to states to help encourage development of recycling infrastructure and other waste diversion projects. This kind of funding would be unprecedented for New Hampshire.

Prior to adjourning, Chair Ebel reminded the group that the next meeting will be held May 27, starting with subcommittee meetings from 9:00 - 10:30 AM, followed by a regular meeting of the full SWWG from 10:30 - 12:00 PM.

Adjourn:

The meeting adjourned at 12:04 PM on April 22, 2022

A recording of this meeting is available at:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/recording/2235594534366792463>