



# THE STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

## Solid Waste Working Group

Karen Ebel, Chair

PO Box 95, 29 Hazen Drive, Concord, New Hampshire 03302-0095

Contact Email: [swwg@maillist2.nh.gov](mailto:swwg@maillist2.nh.gov)

Website: <https://www.des.nh.gov/about/boards-and-committees/new-hampshire-solid-waste-working-group>

### Minutes of February 24, 2023 Solid Waste Working Group (SWWG) Room 208C 29 Hazen Drive, Concord, NH 03302

**Members Present:** Chair Karen Ebel, Reagan Bissonnette, Adam Clark, Matt Hughes, Mark Laliberte, Greg Leahey, Jim Malley, Freda Paris, Benjamin Piche, Steve Poggi, Eric Steinhauser, Duncan Watson, Michael Wimsatt

**Members Present Remotely<sup>1</sup>:** Ben Hoy

**Members Not Present:** Sen. Howard Pearl, Rep. Judy Aron, Megan Fontes, Colin Kelly

#### Call to Order:

Chair Ebel called the meeting to order at 9:29 AM.

#### Approval of Minutes

Steve Poggi made a motion to approve the minutes from the January 27, 2022 meeting; Jim Malley seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by a unanimous vote. Adam Clark abstained because he was absent from that meeting.

#### Discussion on NH municipal solid waste planning and districts

Director Wimsatt presented to the group about town statutory responsibilities related to:

- i. Solid waste planning ([RSA 149-M: 23](#)),
- ii. Formation of districts, ([RSA 149-M:24](#)) and,
- iii. Creating district solid waste plans ([RSA 149-M:25](#))

Steve Poggi noted that the expired NHDES Env-Sw 1900 administrative rules for solid waste management districts could be a framework for the SWWG to make recommendations for new rules. Director Wimsatt indicated that the statutory requirements may need review/updating, and NHDES does not currently have the resources to run a mandatory program to uphold the statute. Adam Clark suggested that it may be easier to track town waste hauler contracts because they show diversion and disposal destinations of waste. The group discussed overlap between facility operating plans and the broader statutory planning requirements for districts.

The group agreed that regionalization can be beneficial when resources are constrained, but it's difficult since most towns have individual systems in place. The Solid Waste Management Fund could be a financial incentive if grants prioritized regional efforts.

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<sup>1</sup> Remote attendance necessary due to logistical considerations

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## Minutes

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### **Discuss and finalize recommendations for content of town solid waste plans, per RSA 149-M:61, III(i)**

Chair Ebel highlighted that the [Vermont SWIPs](#) are focused on education and outreach and believes they are not as onerous as New Hampshire's statute requirements for town/district solid waste plans. Reagan Bissonnette expressed that funding is needed to support the implementation of such plans, regardless of how intensive they are. Funding could be provided directly to towns or to NHDES and other organizations who could assist towns with developing plans.

The SWWG discussed providing more guidance to towns and businesses about how to plan better for solid waste management. For example, the benefits of forming a municipal waste reduction committee or using resources provided by conservation commissions. Steve Poggi suggested creating a template solid waste management plan for districts to fill in. The template may integrate training options (e.g., NHDES Solid Waste Operator Training program), educational materials, and focus topics to guide local actions.

Chair Ebel summarized the discussion by stating that at this time, the SWWG cannot recommend that solid waste management plans be required of municipalities in order for them to dispose of their solid waste in a landfill. However, the SWWG feels there is a great deal of merit in facilitating the creation of better solid waste management plans for municipalities and businesses. The SWWG encourages NHDES to develop educational materials and planning guidance for municipalities, while implementing the 2022 State Solid Waste Management Plan. Reagan Bissonnette made a motion to approve Chair Ebel's recommendation; Jim Malley seconded the motion. The recommendation was approved by a unanimous vote. Director Wimsatt abstained.

### **Discussion of future meeting topics**

Chair Ebel asked if NHDES has identified any needs that the SWWG could help with. Director Wimsatt suggested having a series of presentations to learn about alternative technologies to managing food waste. The group agreed that the next meeting(s) would include presentations about anaerobic digestion, food scrap hauling, and composting facilities. Site visits are also an option.

The March SWWG meeting may need to be moved due to scheduling conflicts. Chair Ebel will work with NHDES to finalize a date and notify the group.

### **Legislative Updates**

Chair Ebel discussed the following 2023 legislative bills in the House:

- [HB 300](#) & [HB 462](#) – both received unanimous bipartisan support (20-0 vote) from the E&A Committee and passed a voice vote on the House floor with no contest. Both bills are with the Finance Committee Division I.
- [HB 465](#) – Commerce Committee voted 18-2 to retain the bill and revisit in the Fall.
- [HB 253](#) – still in the E&A Committee

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### **Minutes**

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Director Wimsatt mentioned public hearings for several bills related to landfill siting including [HB 56](#) & [HB 602](#); both pertain to protecting water resources. He shared that [SB 61](#) & [SB 227](#) were combined by amendment and approved by the Senate ENR Committee after a 5-0 vote. The combined bill moved to the Senate Finance Committee.

Chair Ebel voiced challenges with having solid waste-related bills spread across several legislative committees. It makes it difficult to educate legislators and build a uniform understanding of solid waste issues in NH. Director Wimsatt acknowledged the added challenges when NHDES cannot take an official position on a bill due to the economic facets. However, the lack of stances is not a sign of disinterest in the policy. Chair Ebel continues to testify at public hearings to shift legislator conversations to focus on consumerism upstream, through source reduction, because waste management deals with the backend.

Chair Ebel asked the group if she could write to the House Division 1 Finance Committee that the SWWG strongly supports additional funding for NHDES' Solid Waste Management Bureau to enable more planning and assistance. Eric Steinhauser motioned support for this, seconded by Steve Poggi. There was consensus amongst the group to move ahead with the letter.

#### **Member updates**

Eric reported that the Waste Management Council held a public hearing for their rule revisions. The Council does not have any permit appeals or legal cases on their agenda at this time.

Reagan shared several NRRRA updates:

- Most recycling markets are down, and, in some cases, disposal is a cheaper option. However, towns typically avoid changing their recycling program based on short term markets because it can confuse residents.
- NRRRA Annual Conference is May 22-23 in Concord.

#### **Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 11:25 AM. A recording of this meeting is available at: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/recording/8461824324553783126>