

**ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS
OF A
STATEWIDE CURBSIDE RECYCLING PROGRAM
FOR DELAWARE**

The environmental community in Delaware strongly supports a curbside recycling program. We commend the efforts of the Recycling Public Advisory Council and we support many of its recommendations. We believe that, in order for a statewide curbside recycling program to be successful and cost effective, it must contain certain essential elements, which are enumerated below.

- The program should be implemented statewide. A phased program that starts with New Castle County is reasonable. Implementation of the program in Kent and Sussex counties should follow expeditiously thereafter. The curbside recycling program should be fully implemented statewide within 3 years of enactment of the legislation.
- Unless a local community controls trash collection and provides curbside collection of recyclables, the authority and use of solid waste management districts by the counties should be required.
- Whether local governments provide this service directly or through contract, the fee for providing the service should be reflected separately in an itemized bill. The fee structure should be based on the amount of waste disposed (“pay as you throw”) to provide an economic incentive for recycling as much material as possible.
- Unclaimed bottle deposits should be used to help offset the cost of the program. Bottling distributors/wholesalers should be required to keep and submit records to the department of finance on deposits and redemptions. They should be required to remit \$0.04 of the \$0.05 unclaimed deposit to the department of finance. These revenues should be deposited into a dedicated fund to be used to reduce the costs to households and local governments in implementing the curbside recycling program.
- Placing a surcharge on the tipping fee at DSWA landfills should cover the balance of the program costs. As with unclaimed bottle deposits, these revenues should be remitted to the department of finance and placed in the curbside recycling program fund.
- All Delaware residents must keep their household recyclables and yard waste separate from their trash.
- Yard waste should be banned from landfills within one year of enactment of the curbside recycling program. Homeowners would have the option of either managing their yard waste through such practices as composting, grass-cycling, and mulching or having the material removed by a collection service. Removal

costs are projected to be \$3 to \$5 per month. Several low- or intermediate-technology composting facilities will be needed throughout the state to manage the collected yard waste. DSWA has agreed to manage the operation of yard waste recycling on public sites, if no other option is available.

- The method of recycling would be single-stream. This means that all recyclables (newspaper, phone books, magazines, white office paper, junk mail, corrugated cardboard, paperboard/boxboard, aluminum and steel cans, and narrow-necked plastic bottles, glass bottles) with the exception of yard waste would be placed in one container at the curb, or at the drop-off site. No separation of individual recyclables would be required.
- Residents who haul their own trash must recycle by using the drop-off centers that would be available at DWSA's landfills and transfer stations. Most drop-off centers would be phased out as curbside recycling is implemented in each county.
- The oil recycling, household hazardous waste, and electronic goods programs will continue to exist, but may be modified based on the reduction in the number of drop-off sites.
- DSWA would establish a Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) to process the recyclables and would also provide transfer stations in Kent and Sussex Counties to manage the recyclables collected in those parts of the state. A dedicated fund (generated by collecting a \$3 per ton waste assessment fee) must be established to offset DSWA's costs of operating the MRF and recyclables transfer operations when those costs exceed the value of the recyclables processed and marketed. This same fund would be used for education and enforcement.
- The General Assembly could supplement the curbside recycling program fund with general fund appropriations.
- Minimum recovery rates for recyclable materials have been established at 30% for residential solid waste, and 40% for residential and commercial solid waste combined.

As noted in the RPAC Report of January 24, 2005, "the benefits that Delaware would realize as a result of increased recycling would be significant and would include reduced greenhouse gas emissions, conservation of non-renewable natural resources and energy, extension of landfill life and reduction of long-term landfill liability, and the return of valuable materials to the economic mainstream."

"Diversion of 30% of residential solid waste and 40% residential and commercial solid waste is an achievable goal, but it will require both curbside recycling and a ban on disposal of yard waste in landfills. Neither strategy alone will accomplish the goal. Some costs will be incurred in making the transition to this new recycling system. However, the monthly cost of curbside collection is small when one considers the benefits of handling our waste responsibly today as opposed to leaving it in landfills to be managed and monitored by future generations."