

THE NORTHEAST KINGDOM WASTE MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

Joel Cope, Chair – Brighton

Paul Tomasi, Executive Director

Overview: The Northeast Kingdom Waste Management District (NEKWMD) is comprised of 49 towns in the counties of Caledonia, Essex, Orange, Orleans, and Washington. The population served is 47,594 (2010 census). As such, the NEKWMD serves the largest geographic area and the 3rd largest population of any Waste District or Alliance in the State.

There is no single system for waste management services in the NEKWMD. There is a robust hauling community comprised of approximately 30 registered haulers. These haulers are responsible for picking up all landfill-bound wastes and a significant portion of recycling throughout the District. Wastes destined for the landfill are picked in the following ways: “curbside” subscription service, “curbside” town contracts, or from one of the many municipally owned and operated transfer facilities. Approximately, 2,800 tons of recyclables are collected through a network of 28 public facilities scattered throughout the NEKWMD. Recyclables collected at these facilities are source-separated by the residents who bring them. Private haulers account for an additional 2,300 tons of recyclables collected mostly through commercial entities.

Most recyclables from the 28 facilities are hauled by the NEKWMD to our facility in Lyndonville where they are baled and sold. The NEKWMD generates between \$150,000 and \$200,000 annually from the sale of recyclables (~20-30% of our annual budget). We are one of the few Districts in the State to provide the collection, processing, and sale of recyclables. Because the NEKWMD has greater control over the flow of recyclables, we are in a better position to explore possibilities for additional recycling opportunities. We were one of the first Districts to collect agricultural bale wrap and alkaline batteries for recycling. In addition to the materials identified in Act 148, many NEKWMD facilities also accept aerosol cans, batteries (alkaline, automotive, & rechargeable), bale wrap, books (hard & soft covered), cell phones, electronics, fluorescent bulbs, food scraps, lead fishing sinkers, leaf & yard wastes, mercury-containing devices, oil, oil filters, plastic bags, printer cartridges, propane tanks, scrap metal, and tires.

The NEKWMD also has on-going reuse programs for clothing and bicycles, and seasonal collections for maple sap tubing.

The NEKWMD is one of the few Districts in the State to provide its own Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) services. In addition to collecting HHW from May 1st through October 1st at our Lyndonville facility, we provide collection services in several outlying towns annually by utilizing our own staff.

The NEKWMD has a surcharge on trash of \$22.00/ton. This surcharge was reduced for 2014 from \$22.55/ton. There is no per capita assessment in the NEKWMD, and the only item for which there is a charge is tires. Businesses, that qualify, are charged the cost of disposal for hazardous wastes.

1. How do you plan to meet the requirements of Act 148 and the Materials Management Plan (MMP)?

The NEKWMD has already begun laying the groundwork and has already met some of the requirements of Act 148 and the draft Materials Management Plan (MMP).

- The NEKWMD Board has been studying alternatives for collecting and processing recyclables in response to Act 148.
- The Executive Director has been active in following legislation and testifying in the House and Senate Natural Resources Committees.
- NEKWMD staff have been active participants in the Food Cycle Coalition and the Universal Recycling Working Group. Both efforts involve statewide efforts for managing food scraps and outreach, respectively.
- NEKWMD staff are working to update our website (www.nekwmd.org) to include an “A to Z” list of materials, where those materials can be taken, and how they are to be managed.
- The NEKWMD Board and Executive Director are working with member towns to expand facility hours and add waste collection options at facilities that are currently “recycling only”. Nine (9) towns currently have “recycling only” facilities, and fourteen (14) towns are only open one day per week.
- Food scrap collection is currently offered at seven (7) facilities and will be phased-in at other facilities over the next few years. The NEKWMD is working closely with the Highfields Center for Composting (HCC) to ensure our organics collection programs are introduced in a systematic and sustainable manner.
- The NEKWMD is working with the Northeast Waste Management Officials’ Association (NEWMOA) and the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (VT ANR) to develop unit-based pricing, program guidance for managing trash. Nineteen (19) towns in the NEKWMD are funding trash disposal services through property taxes or flat sanitation taxes. Sixteen (16) towns have already implemented unit-based pricing for trash services. The remaining fourteen (14) towns have trash services provided by subscription service. Some are unit-based and others are not. We will amend our hauling ordinance to require all haulers provide unit-based pricing to their customers as a condition of being permitted to haul wastes within the NEKWMD.

2. What resources do you need to make that happen?

All solid waste management entities will require a significant amount of money to implement Act 148 and the MMP. This financial burden will ultimately fall on the Vermont tax payer

whether it comes in the form of an increase in surcharge, a raise in per capita fees, property tax increases, or some combination.

The Vermont Product Stewardship Council has been instrumental in promoting Environmental Producer Responsibility (EPR) legislation. The Vermont Legislature has been proactive in implementing EPR legislation in Vermont to shift financial responsibility back to producers. Additional legislation should be considered that could provide additional opportunities for lowering material management costs – packaging, tires, mattresses, etc.

Some of the costs associated with the infrastructure improvements the NEKWMD is considering are listed below:

Resource	Used	New
Eddy Current Separator	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 50,000.00
Cross Magnet Belt	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 25,000.00
Glass Classifier	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 60,000.00
Star Screen	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 90,000.00
2-Ram Baler	\$200,000.00	\$ 370,000.00
Power Upgrade	\$100,000.00	\$ 100,000.00
Hook-Lift Truck	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 100,000.00
Roll-Offs	\$105,000.00	\$ 105,000.00
Building Upgrade/Expansion	\$250,000.00	\$ 1,375,000.00
	\$785,000.00	\$ 2,275,000.00

3. What are the challenges you face to meet those goals?

One of the biggest challenges facing the NEKWMD is moving towns toward unit-based pricing. Since the passage of Act 148, NEKWMD staff have met with several towns that tax fund their trash services. One of these towns, Newark, implemented a unit-based pricing program last July. Town officials and residents have been pleased with the results. The town actually saw a decrease of 46% in their tonnage headed to the landfill. We are hopeful that the example of Newark and other towns who have already implemented unit-based pricing will be enough to move towns in that direction.

Although the NEKWMD has several permitted compost facilities and several chicken farmers currently accepting food scraps, we will need to develop several more sites in order to accommodate all the organic material available for composting and diversion. Transportation of organics has proven to be somewhat problematic, but we are hopeful our

hauling community will be able to provide these services before the landfill ban on organics takes effect.

The NEKWMD also sees parallel collection of recyclables as a potential problem. Our current District-wide system relies heavily on our network of drop-off centers for residential recycling. S208 allows for exemptions from this requirement, but it is not yet clear what criteria might be used to allow for this exemption.

The draft MMP requires Solid Waste Management Entities (SWME) to adopt variable rate pricing and to require haulers to submit a variable rate pricing structure to the SWME for approval and implementation. The draft MMP further requires SWMEs to take enforcement action such as rejecting or revoking the haulers license, fining them, or taking other enforcement action if the hauler does not meet the intent of Act 148. Review of commercial hauler variable rate pricing structures should be conducted by ANR. This would ensure a consistent, statewide determination that all commercial hauler pricing structures meet the goals of Act 148. Unlike some SWMEs, ANR already has an enforcement division.

4. How might you work with each other to accomplish the requirements?

The NEKWMD is an active participant in the Vermont Solid Waste Manager's Association, the Vermont Product Stewardship Council, the Vermont Recycling Coordinator's Network, the Vermont Hazardous Waste Network, the Food Cycle Coalition, and the Universal Recycling Working Group. These groups are composed of Alliances, Districts, ANR, and various other stakeholders. Many of these groups have been working together for many years and will continue to do so even after Act 148 and the MMP have been implemented.

Vermont is a small state, but a one-system approach to managing wastes statewide is ill advised. There is, however, no reason why programs should not look the same or vary similar no matter where you are in the state. It will be very important for all SWMEs to work more closely together in order to accomplish this.

5. Where do you see your organization, as it relates to materials management, in five years?

The NEKWMD is confident we will be able to meet the requirement of Act 148 and the MMP. We may need a little more than 5 years to get there, but we will continue to show improvement in providing convenient, low-cost alternatives for waste disposal and recycling services.

The NEKWMD will also be working hard to promote the benefits of waste reduction, which remains the most efficient and cost effective method for reducing wastes and conserving resources.