

The Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) would like to thank the committee for their support in passage of the Universal Recycling law (Act 148), the most significant legislative change to materials management laws in 25 years.

#### WHAT PROMPTED THE PASSAGE OF UNIVERSAL RECYCLING (Act 148)?

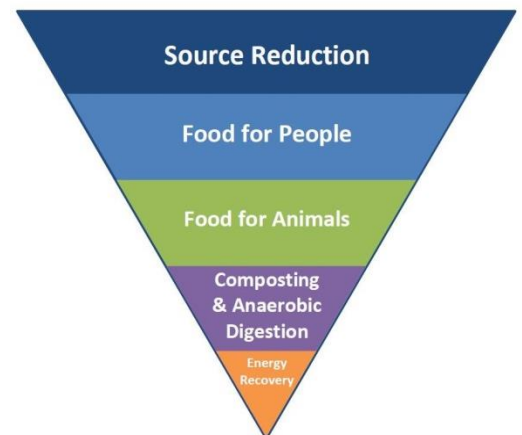
- A stagnant recycling rate in Vermont of 30-36% since 2001 (we will re-adjust our focus to Vermont's disposal rate, which is a better measure of success)
- 50% or more of the material we throw away could be recycled or composted
- Landfilling produces GHG emissions contributing to climate change
- Recyclables as well as food scraps, and leaf and yard debris are valuable resources
- Limited landfill space in Vermont

#### WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF UNIVERSAL RECYCLING?

- Establishes a baseline of **consistent** and **convenient** services statewide for residents and businesses
- Saves valuable resources/promotes sustainability (**will increase overall diversion rate to ~50%**)
- **Reduces GHG emissions** generated by waste management **by 37% percent**
- Supports local resilience and sustainability (use of compost reduces soil erosion, flooding impacts, assists with nutrient retention in soils)
- Creates new markets and new opportunities for businesses and entrepreneurs
- Reduces need for expansion or development of landfills

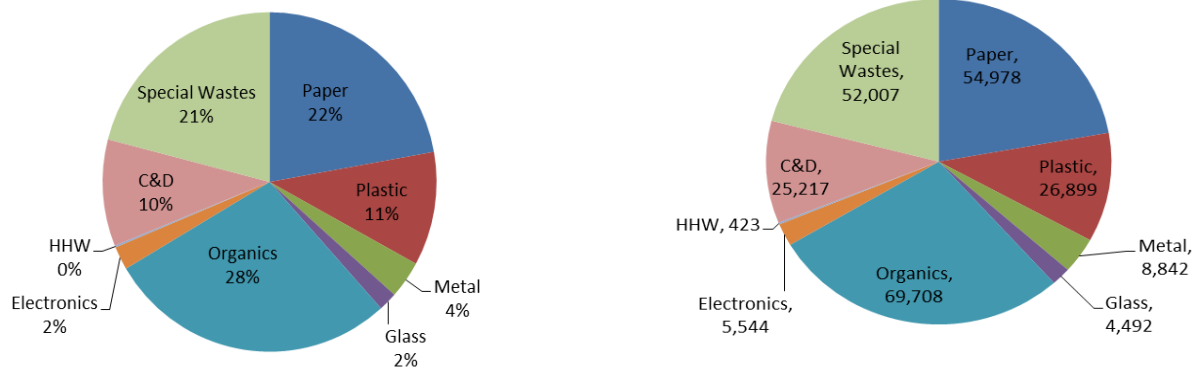
#### WHAT IS INCLUDED IN THE LAW?

- Phases out disposal in landfills of recyclables; food scraps and leaf, yard, and clean wood debris (also referred to as "organics")
- Provides convenience by establishing **parallel collection systems** (by facilities and haulers) for recyclables and food, leaf, and yard materials.
- Provides incentives by having all municipalities implement **variable rate pricing** —charge assessed on the basis of the volume or weight of trash residents dispose
- Improves recycling options in publicly owned spaces by having **recycling receptacles wherever there disposal receptacles in publically owned spaces.**
- Creates an incentive to **invest in infrastructure** (such as composting facilities, anaerobic digesters, and recycling facilities) to process and manage these materials
- Includes a **food recovery hierarchy** – with highest priority being reduction at the source



#### HOW IS ANR COORDINATING WITH STAKEHOLDERS TO IMPLEMENT THE LAW?

- ANR completed a [waste composition study](#), which provides sound baseline data on the types and amount of materials that are currently disposed in Vermont. The graph demonstrates that more than half of the materials disposed by Vermont residents are recyclable or organics and should be diverted and used for higher purposes. Note that ANR will conduct another waste composition study to document progress in diverting these valuable materials in 5 years as required by the Universal Recycling law.



**Figures:** Estimated residential trash disposal composition by percent and by ton. The greatest amount of material sent to the landfill is organics (28% or ~70,000 tons, with ~41,500 tons being food scraps).

- ANR conducted a comprehensive evaluation of the solid waste system in Vermont ([Systems Analysis](#) report) and an assessment on the implementation of the Universal Recycling Law.
- ANR developed the [draft Materials Management Plan](#) (Draft MMP), formerly the Solid Waste Management Plan, which contains goals and performance standards for ANR and districts/municipalities.
  - The overall goal is to decrease waste disposed by 25% (decreasing disposal rate by ~103,000 tons/year based on 2011 disposal rate).
  - Focuses on five materials material types: (1) recyclables, (2) organics, (3) construction & demolition debris, (4) household hazardous waste/e-waste/small business hazardous waste, and (5) sludge/septage.
  - Includes tools of action by categories: public education and outreach, extended producer responsibility/product stewardship, government leadership, infrastructure improvements, mandates and disposal bans.
  - Includes performance standards for ANR and solid waste planning entities, to establish more consistent services statewide. With provisions in Act 148, ANR can hold the solid waste entities accountable for implementing approved solid waste implementation plans and meeting these performance standards.
- Focused on Organics:
  - Established the Vermont Organics Partnership and hosted multiple meetings,
  - Engaging with the Farm2Plate network,
  - Coordinating with Agency of Agriculture, Department of Health, and Buildings and General Services, VTrans
  - Developing a web-based organics mapping system, to allow users to easily identify food scrap generators and composting facilities
  - Working with the Food Bank to improve information and resources to assist with food recovery efforts
  - Establishing a Working Group with Agency of Ag, composters, and other interested parties for continuing work on persistent herbicides and other important issues for viable composting in VT
- ANR drafted guidance on variable rate pricing to assist municipalities
- Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) – In addition to existing EPR programs, ANR is working with the stewardship organization to implement the new Paint EPR program. ANR is also in the process of establishing a stakeholder process to direct legislative consideration of additional programs.

- Outreach (some of this is on-going):
  - Worked with municipalities and solid waste management districts, industry, and ACCD to develop universal symbols for recycling, food scraps, and trash that can be used consistently statewide.
  - Meeting with various sectors (such as hospitals, colleges, supermarkets, haulers, etc.)
  - Improving and extending information and resources that is posted on ANR's Solid Waste web site.
  - Mailed a notification letter to over 700 large generators (104 tons/yr and 56 tons/yr) to inform them of the first phase of the ban that starts July 1, 2014 for generators within 20 miles of a facility that will accept their food scraps and the second phase in July 1, 2015.
  - Participate actively in a municipally lead Act 148 Work Group focused on developing consistent messaging available for use by interested parties statewide
  - Ongoing coordination internally with:
    - ACCD – Economic Development; and Marketing Office
    - Buildings and General Services
    - ANR's Forest Parks and Recreation
    - ANR's Air Quality and Climate Division and the Watershed Management Division; Environmental Assistance Office
    - Agency of Transportation
    - Department of Health
    - Agency of Agriculture – Food and Markets
  - External Partnerships include:
    - Farm to Plate – Food Cycle Coalition
    - USDA – Rural Development; and Natural Resources Conservation Services
    - USEPA – Region 1
    - NEWMOA
    - Vermont Campus Sustainability Network
    - Vermont Businesses for Social Responsibility
    - Composters Association of Vermont
    - And many others



#### **WHAT ARE ANR'S LEGISLATIVE REQUESTS?**

- Establish a fund to assist with a portion of the needed capital improvements to implement the Universal Recycling Law.
- Require every municipality to be in a solid waste management district.
- Change the definition of commercial hauler to no longer exclude vehicles with a rated capacity of one ton or less, in order to level the playing field among haulers.
- [Report to the Vermont Legislature: Act 148 Implementation](#)