

# **Mad River Resource Management Alliance**

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April 11, 2014

Testimony Provided to the Vermont House Natural Resources and Energy Committee

Chairman Klein and Committee Members,

I appreciate the opportunity to come before this committee and provide testimony. My name is John Malter and I am the Administrator for the Mad River Resource Management Alliance (MRRMA). This is a contracted, part time position. The Alliance is a group of eight towns that are joined through an Interlocal Agreement for the Management of Municipal Solid Waste and they include the towns of Duxbury, Fayston, Moretown, Northfield, Roxbury, Waitsfield, Warren and Waterbury. In 2008 we changed our name from the Mad River Solid Waste Alliance to the Mad River Resource Management Alliance to better reflect that our mission is to manage resources within and outside of our communities.

Our Alliance functions as a public/private partnership with the goal to help our communities navigate the world of resource management. This collaboration has enabled us to accomplish our mission under Act 78 and our Solid Waste Implementation Plan and we expect to meet the challenges of Act 148 and the Materials Management Plan in a cost effective manner.

Our highest priority has always been to assist our residents in properly managing household hazardous waste through our collection events, educational information, and membership and participation in the Vermont Product Stewardship Council and the Product Stewardship Institute. In the past fifteen years we have served 5,369 households in collecting 25,427 gallons of liquid chemicals, 20,343 pounds of solid chemicals, 19,239 gallons of used oil and 26,440 feet of fluorescent lamp tubes,(over 5 miles of lamp tubes). Following Tropical Storm Irene in 2011 the MRRMA set up a hazardous waste collection site at the Moretown Landfill and for over two weeks we received all manner of hazardous waste from our residents, public officials and folks from neighboring communities. This was an example of the public/private partnership that we foster. The Moretown Landfill offered us space to establish a collection point, the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation and FEMA helped support the disposal costs through our contractor and the Chittenden Solid Waste District provided a large covered roll off for temporary storage of materials collected. With the Irene event there were similar stories in other Alliances, Districts and Municipalities to accomplish a necessary mission.

The MRRMA is funded through a many legged stool. We utilize a per capita fee of \$2.75 and we apply for grants for a variety of things including; managing household hazardous waste(HHW) events; the disposal of pesticides; educational programs. We charge a per gallon or per pound fee for folks who generate more than 10 pounds or 10 gallons of material that isn't reimbursed through HHW stewardship programs. The use of the Solid Waste Implementation Plan Grant could change depending on the needs within our communities. The various mandates within Act 148 will require more resources to accomplish them. The MRRMA has hosted the Moretown Landfill from 1994 until it's closure last July. The Moretown Landfill provided ~40% of our

budget towards education and household hazardous waste management. With the current closure there is no revenue from the landfill. We anticipate that the costs for household hazardous waste management will ultimately decline through our participation in the Paintcare Inc. program since paint constitutes 40-50% of our hazardous waste volume. The fact that our residents will ultimately be more able to buy recycled latex paint through the Local Color Program with the Chittenden Solid Waste District is another benefit of this program. People want to have the opportunity to buy recycled and this is a good vehicle for that.

Our electronics recycling was initiated with a pilot partnership of Good Point Recycling, Addison County Solid Waste District, Lamoille Regional Solid Waste District, Greater Upper Valley Solid Waste District and the MRRMA in 2001. A total of over 251 tons of electronics have been diverted from disposal in the MRRMA since our program was established. This ultimately resulted in the very successful program operating throughout the State. The collection sites are a combination of public and private facilities.

Composting of food scraps, another major component of Act 148 has been getting attention by the MRRMA and other alliances and districts through cooperative truck load sales of backyard compost bins and kitchen food scrap collectors. We have been doing this since 1996 and have sold 899 of these bins which can compost up to 650 pounds of food and garden debris annually. This results in over 250 tons of material diverted from the landfill and able to be beneficially used in the garden. We are also working with both the Washington West Supervisory Union and the Washington South Supervisory Union on school composting activities in conjunction with Grow Compost and a local farmer in Northfield both located in the MRRMA. We also work with the Central Vermont Solid Waste District on the collection of food scraps at many of our larger generators. These types of partnerships provide hands on education to both children and adults and a bottom up solution for converting a previous waste product to a valuable resource.

The Materials Management Plan requires that we meet specific goals in many areas. My feeling is that success will be measured not just by how much material is taken out of the waste stream but also continuity of the programs and the development of new generations of folks that want to ensure that we are managing our resources and not creating waste.

In closing, with S. 208, the establishment of a Solid Waste Infrastructure Advisory Committee would be beneficial to the concerns of many stakeholders. If the \$6.00 franchise fee is raised a dollar that revenue may go toward meeting some of the mandates of Act 148 but we are going to need to be creative and work cooperatively among our various organizations if all the needs identified are going to be met. At this point I am not going to get into the debate over the C&D Pilot Program or the 1 ton exemption. There is a need for the State to provide leadership in the area of uniform education and enforcement of Act 148. All of the entities providing governance need to have the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to accomplish the intent of Act 148. As a State we should be able to have models that range from Fords to Cadillacs and they don't have to be from this model year.

Thanks for the opportunity to present this testimony.