



Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

MINNESOTA  
DEPARTMENT OF  
COMMERCE



# State Resource Recovery Program Recommendations Report

The state of Minnesota as a leader in waste reduction, reuse, recycling, and promotion of environmentally preferable products

July 2008

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# Introduction

Minn. Stat. § 115A.15, ([www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/stats/115A/15.html](http://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/stats/115A/15.html)), requires that the Commissioner of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) and the Commissioner of the Department of Commerce (DOC) through the State Energy Office, submit recommendations to the Commissioner of Administration regarding operation of the state's Resource Recovery Program.

The State of Minnesota holds itself accountable for its resource recovery activities through the Department of Administration and continues to work on and seek out options for improvement or enhancement of those activities.

The preliminary Minnesota Climate Change Action Plan calls on state agencies to lead by example. Recycling in Minnesota has the effect of reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 6 million tons, and waste management, including waste reduction, was identified by the Minnesota Climate Change Action Group as one of the top three areas to target for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The Department of Administration can use the recommendations contained in this report to assist agencies with reducing their carbon footprints.

## Organization and purpose of report

This report covers two major topics, which align with the responsibilities of the Department of Administration's Resource Recovery Program and Materials Management Division (MMD):

- waste reduction, reuse, recycling, and organics recovery
- procurement and end-of-life management

Although not specifically mentioned in Minn. Stat. § 115A.15, the MPCA and DOC offer recommendations for energy conservation. Since the statute includes the Commissioner of Commerce through the State Energy Office as a co-author, the MPCA and DOC conclude that energy waste is a type of waste that should be addressed in the report.

Recommendations provided in previous reports are noted as *ongoing*. New recommendations that have not appeared in previous reports are noted as *new*. Recommendations from previous reports that have been successfully implemented for at least a year were deleted from this report.

Staff from the MPCA and DOC are available to assist the Department of Administration in implementation of the recommendations contained in this report.

The annual *Pollution Prevention Summary Report* submitted to the Governor by the Interagency Pollution Prevention Advisory Team (IPPAT) is a useful tool for tracking pollution prevention progress by the state. The Department of Administration can use the IPPAT report to record successes and identify opportunities for improvement by the Resource Recovery Program.

## Priority recommendations

The following are priority recommendations for the Department of Administration. Staff from the MPCA and the DOC are available to assist with implementing these recommendations.

- Seek Legislative approval to implement a revenue sharing agreement from the proceeds of the sale of recycled materials to return to the Resource Recovery Program in order to increase participation and expand the program to include new waste streams.—*new*
- Establish requirements in new state construction contract Request for Proposals (RFPs), and enforce existing requirements, that recyclable material such as corrugated cardboard, steel, aluminum, and carpet be recovered from building deconstruction/remodeling projects and recycled. Contract specialists working on construction RFPs can seek assistance from the MPCA.—*new*
- Require state contract vendors on three key state contracts to track and report environmentally preferable purchases made by Cooperative Purchasing Venture members. Work with the MPCA to determine which three state contracts will be selected.—*new*

## Waste reduction, reuse, recycling, and organics recovery

The following recommendations promote the reduction of waste generated by state agencies, separation and recovery of reusable commodities, separation and recovery of recyclable commodities and surplus property, and recovery of organic material. A change to Minnesota Statute § 115A.03 regarding the definition and handling of source-separated compostable materials has led to reconsideration of the definition of waste reduction and recycling. Since composting is a form of waste reduction or recycling and falls under the definition of “recyclable commodities” in Minnesota Statute § 115A.15, we have provided recommendations for organics recovery.

The Resource Recovery Program continually strives to increase recycling rates across state agencies in the Metro area. In 2007, the Department of Administration conducted the 7% in '07 State Agency Recycling Challenge, with the goal of increasing recycling at state agencies by 7%. The program was a success, with the 10 of the 21 participating agencies meeting or exceeding the goal. The State Office Building was declared the winner of the recycling challenge, recycling 557 pounds per capita. A few months after completion of the challenge, the Minnesota House of Representatives requested a waste audit of the State Office Building. The MPCA and the Resource Recovery Program worked together to provide recommendations for waste reduction and improvement in the building's recycling program.

State agencies in the Capitol Complex maintained a steady recycling rate of 61 percent by weight of their discarded materials in FY 2007. Within the seven-county metropolitan area, 64 percent was recycled by state agencies, up from 62 percent in 2005, according to the *2007 Recycling Rate Progress Report* compiled by the Department of Administration. The statutory recycling goal for state agencies under Minn. Stat. § 115A.15, subd. 9, is 60 percent.

### Recommendations for waste reduction

To further progress already achieved by the state's Resource Recovery Program, we recommend that the Department of Administration:

- Continue to research, procure, and use environmentally preferable products, with a focus on green-certified cleaning products and bathroom paper products.—*new*
- Institute a resource management contract for waste hauling at state-owned buildings to reduce the amount of waste created and help properly manage waste that is created. The MPCA can provide assistance with these contracts.—*new*

- Continue to purchase electronic equipment that defaults easily to duplex when printing and copying to reduce the amount of paper used in state agencies.—*ongoing*
- Establish requirements for nontoxic and low-VOC products (such as paints, solvents, glues, textiles, and carpeting) in new state building construction, remodeling, or installation contract RFPs. Contract specialists working on construction or remodeling RFPs can seek assistance from the MPCA.—*new*
- Expand the posting of RFPs electronically for downloading by vendors to bidders whenever possible and encourage bidders to send responses to RFPs electronically.—*ongoing*
- Continue to promote the purchase of recycled-content products by placing the list of those products on the Office Supply Connection Web site.—*new*
- Continue to work to increase waste reduction by providing state agencies, via the Resource Recovery Program, with online tips for reducing waste and for increasing recycling and reuse of materials.—*ongoing*

## **Recommendations for reuse**

- Expand the reuse of surplus state government property by creating an online surplus exchange program or using an existing one (e.g., the Minnesota Materials Exchange: [www.mnexchange.org](http://www.mnexchange.org)). Agencies could advertise their surplus property on the Web site as well as post a “materials needed” request.—*ongoing*
- Promote use of surplus supplies from the Department of Administration’s Fleet and Surplus Service that are available for state agencies to use.—*ongoing*

## **Recommendations for recycling**

- Work with the MPCA to enforce the Public Entities Law, Minnesota Statute § 115A.471, requiring that all state agencies manage their waste in accordance with the county solid waste management plan. The MPCA recommends focusing on St. Cloud State University and the Department of Natural Resources’ offices in Sauk Rapids (Benton County) to ensure recycling rates meet or exceed recycling rates established in county plans.—*new*
- Include overall waste generation figures along with recycled waste totals, in order to track overall progress in reducing total waste generated.—*new*
- Establish requirements in state construction contract RFPs that contractors track costs and amounts of materials recycled and/or disposed of on a monthly basis, and at project completion.—*ongoing*
- Ensure that recycling containers are placed in convenient, visible locations, as well as next to all garbage bins, in all state offices.—*ongoing*
- Work with the MPCA on new and more visible signage for recycling bins at state agencies to reflect the changes in materials that can be recycled.—*new*
- Continue to offer consulting services from the MPCA to state offices that have not met the statutory recycling goal of 60 percent. The MPCA could work with the Resource Recovery Program to perform a recycling and waste audit of the offices and provide recommendations for increasing recycling and waste reduction.—*ongoing*
- Evaluate the current recycling reporting system used by the Resource Recovery Program to calculate recycling rates by state agencies in the Metro area to ensure standardization of the reporting system, as well as quality of the data.—*new*
- Assist state agencies with developing internal waste reduction and recycling committees, with assistance from the MPCA.—*new*
- Meet with the MPCA to review progress on the implementation of the recommendations from the Phase 1 and Phase 2 Assessment of the Recycling Program Review.—*new*

## Recommendations for organics recovery

- Promote waste reduction by increasing recovery efforts for organic materials from the Department of Natural Resources, Department of Health and Human Services, Labor and Commerce building, and the Capitol Complex area.—*ongoing*
- Develop purchasing specifications and enter into contracts for biodegradable products, such as plates, cups, flatware, and bags, to be used where organics collection programs have been implemented.—*ongoing*

## Procurement and end-of-life management

Procuring recyclable commodities and procuring commodities containing recycled materials and other environmentally preferable products is an important part of the state's resource recovery and waste reduction efforts. In addition to procurement and end-of-life management issues, this section discusses conserving natural resources through energy-related efforts.

The Materials Management Division continues to strive to offer environmentally preferable products on contract whenever possible. In FY 2007 and 2008, MMD added furniture with recycled content and fewer VOC emissions, 100% recycled content paper, and less toxic cleaning products to state contracts.

In 2006, the Materials Management Division of the Department of Administration offered \$286,725,261 worth of environmentally preferable products and services on state contract to state agencies and Cooperative Purchasing Venture (CPV) members. MMD updates *Environmentally Preferable Goods and Services Available from State Contracts* every two years. Current figures will be available in the Department of Administration's *Resource Recovery Recommendations Report to the Legislature* in December 2008.

To further the progress already achieved by the Materials Management Division and the Fleet and Surplus Sales Unit, we recommend that the Department of Administration:

## Recommendations for procurement and incorporating environmental criteria into state contracts

- Encourage default purchasing for items with environmentally preferable attributes without additional cost.—*new*
- Require the use of lead-free wheel weights, whenever possible, for all fleet maintenance contracts.—*new*
- Continue to implement, whenever possible, the environmentally preferable purchasing processes that provide a statutorily allowable preference (Minn. Stat. § 16B.121 [www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/stats/16B/121.html](http://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/stats/16B/121.html)) within each bid and proposal, which is based on the post-consumer recycled content of the products under consideration.—*ongoing*
- Continue to follow the Public Entities Law, which requires state facilities to include a provision in waste management contracts for waste to be processed through waste-to-energy or MSW composting or in a manner consistent with local solid waste planning.—*ongoing*
- Incorporate questions regarding lead and mercury content into applicable contract solicitation documents. This information should be used to enable buyers to make informed decisions when there are multiple awards. MMD should also include information on lead and mercury content on the contract release.—*new*
- Continue to promote purchase of environmentally preferable products through the use of the Department of Administration's environmental codes system.—*ongoing*
- Promote the use of, and state a preference for, recycled-content products, in accordance with Minn. Stat. § 116B.122.—*ongoing*

## **Recommendations for environmentally preferable purchasing training**

- Add an environmentally preferable purchasing section to the monthly procurement coordinators' e-mail newsletter, with assistance from the MPCA.—*new*
- Update the link to the EPP guide on the MMD's environmental purchasing Web site to reflect the current web address ([www.greenguardian.com/government/eppg](http://www.greenguardian.com/government/eppg)) and promote the revised guide.—*new*
- Continue to update the environmentally responsible purchasing section of the Authority of Local Purchasing training manual that is provided to state employees and provide training in environmentally preferable purchasing as part of state certification classes, with assistance from the MPCA.—*ongoing*

## **Recommendations for tracking and evaluation of environmentally preferable purchasing**

- Use the valuable information obtained by tracking environmentally preferable purchases to structure future specifications so contracts will have goods and services that are more environmentally preferable.—*ongoing*
- Report the findings from the electronic tracking mechanism for E85 fuel use in state agency fleets to agencies, in order to increase the use of E85 in state vehicles.—*ongoing*
- Work with procurement coordinators to determine better measures for tracking non-state contract environmentally preferable purchases, such as requiring buyers to code each purchase order with an environmental code on Minnesota Accounting and Procurement System (MAPS).—*new*

## **Recommendations for energy conservation**

The Department of Administration should continue to focus on identifying and reducing energy waste in state agency buildings and transportation and be guided by the broad policy recommendations of the Minnesota Climate Change Advisory Group. The department should take advantage of the many programs in place to identify the relative energy performance of its buildings, and, especially for the poorer performing buildings, take advantage of utility programs and a Department of Commerce program for funding energy improvements.

Furthermore, the department should also consider the following:

- Continue to chair the SmartFleet committee, in accordance with Minn. Stat. § 16C.137, and implement the goals and actions as defined in statute.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of Governor's Executive Order 05-16 and an ongoing energy savings goal using 2005 as the base year.

## **Conclusion**

The recommendations contained in this report are meant to build and improve on the success of the state Resource Recovery Program and to enhance interagency communication and networking, as well as assist the Department of Administration in achieving its resource recovery goals. The MPCA and DOC look forward to a continued relationship with the Department of Administration in the areas of waste management and procurement and energy conservation.