Expectations and Timelines

MN has goal (from most recent Solid Waste Policy Report) of 80% recycling rate for beverage containers. Question from attendees: why are MN and WI working together?

- History of collaboration on solid waste issues (e.g., e-waste).
- Similarities in beverage container recovery rates, economic policies
- History of national work on this issue—both states have participated in national discussions, but are further along than some other states, with well-developed curbside/residential recycling programs.
- Several metropolitan areas that cross state boundaries (Twin Cities-St. Croix County, La Crosse area, Duluth-Superior/Western Lake Superior Sanitary District)

Recap of August 19 Meeting

- Everyone agreed on need to increase recycling.
- Idea is to have a 3 to 4-meeting process, with plan in development by end of 2008.
- Original model was national product stewardship agreements (i.e., with mercury in auto switches, carpet manufacturers, paint manufacturers).
- Idea is building on voluntary efforts to create a more systematic/comprehensive approach.
- Key concern: what is our baseline for beverage container recycling?

Update from Data Subgroup

- Examining three main data categories: consumption, generation, recycling.
- We are at the mercy of the data that are available. Even a nationwide baseline would be difficult and uncertain; on state-by-state basis, for many of the beverage types, data may not be available at all for consumption.
- Even bottle bill states have problems with generation data—only California has reasonably good numbers based on the structure of its program.
- We have two tasks that are not necessarily related: establish a baseline and measure the impact of new initiatives.
- Can design measurements for new initiatives without necessarily having a good baseline.
- Need to decide what to measure—if recycling rate is difficult to estimate, look at measuring increases in tons recycled, etc.
- Need to understand how numbers are calculated. Even EPA recycling data are collected by arcane methods using very different data sources to calculate recycling rates, etc.
- Since some state-based data are more available, may be able to use those data as surrogate for all data.
Could set up straw man numbers for states based on share of national data, but wide variation state-to-state.

Could measure progress based on changes in tons of UBCs landfilled.

MRF data are relatively solid; could use MRF data as surrogate (note problems, however, with PET and glass, which aren’t all UBCs).

MN’s 80% by 2012 goal is made more difficult if baseline unknown and progress can’t be measured.

The 80% goal was based on what is being achieved elsewhere and the urgency of the issue, especially with respect to aluminum and greenhouse gases.

Decent data will be needed in order to get buy-in on actions from grocers in particular (their business is highly data-driven).

**MN & WI Recycling Profiles**

[See powerpoint presentations on MPCA website]

http://www.pca.state.mn.us/oea/stewardship/containers.cfm

**Group Exercise – Optimizing the System**

Participants self-divided into three groups representing Collection, Processing, and Financing, with the objective of identifying opportunities (gaps) in the current system of recovering UBCs.

**Collection**

- More incentives or incentive-driven programs, such as Recyclebank
- Schools and other institutions (as opposed to events) – money for collection bins
- Away from home businesses like C-Stores, carwashes; wherever cars get cleaned out
- At C-Stores, considerations like color and branding requirements, and fire and safety regulations, are a barrier to putting out bins
- Contamination issues are particularly troublesome at events
- Curbside is where the material is; increase curbside programs, education, convey importance. Recyclebank is one model.
- Rural locations are under-serviced
- More enforcement needed at events and institutions.
- Single-stream collection may increase recovery rates.
- Recycling needs to be available and transparent – i.e., clear rules and convenient opportunity
- Multi-family dwellings still a big gap
- General availability of bins and receptacles
- Infrastructure is in place for residential (esp. single family) but not for event/school/business/away-from-home
- Reverse distribution opportunities?
- Building codes should mandate space for recycling containers, e.g., dumpsters
- Variable rate trash disposal with meaningful price disincentives for larger trash bins
- Waste Wise audits for businesses
- Ban burn barrels; promote recycling instead of burning
- Need to prioritize the greatest opportunities for collecting more material

**Processing/Marketing**

- **Cost**
  - Need transparencies in cost of recycling
  - How do we pass price signals back to consumer
  - Need economies of scale for process recycled material
  - High cost difference between single stream and dual stream. Need more volume for single stream to work.

**Logistics and Transportation**

- Transportation costs are up for all parties
- Need logistics cooperation for transportation of recycled material
- Opportunities to shorten supply chain

**Packaging and Design**

- Is expanded recycled content in packaging needed?
- Design for the Environment (DFE) important

**MRF’s and Processing**

- Need better technologies in MRF’s and dirty MRF’s
- MRF’s moving up the value chain
- Is vertical integration needed
- Need more investment in processing

**Markets**

- Need expanded opportunity for all materials
- Does expanded opportunities expand materials supply
- Need support for small markets in forms of collection and education
- Bottle to bottle market important for glass, HDPE and PET
- Is demand an issue?

**Contamination of recycling stream**

- PLA as a contaminate in the PET recycling stream an emerging issue

**Reporting**

- Reporting needed by all public and private recyclers

**Glass**

- Create new markets for glass
- Green glass no markets
- Glass value could be higher
- Expand glass sorting capacity
Financing

- Utilize existing infrastructure (i.e., existing investments)
- Use a systems approach to drive desired behaviors
- State should prioritize dollars to support markets
- New financing or support from consumers
- Identify inefficiencies to reduce costs
- Ease or remove burden on local units of government and general taxpayers
- New financing or support from producers (broadly interpreted)
- Use all state recycling dollars for recycling
- Recycling incentives/rewards from sponsors (e.g., RecycleBank)
- Full cost accounting on waste management options, and users of options pay full costs
- Build off of effective programs
- Structure contracts to provide dollar incentives for increasing recycling tons
- Basic dichotomy seems to be: user pays vs. public pays

Roles: Addressing the Product Chain from Manufacture to Disposal (group discussion)

- There is a need to generate better numbers in order to elicit industry buy-in. This could include:
  - using rural and urban pilot projects with strong metrics, finding out what works and what doesn’t, and extrapolating from there
  - instituting new reporting requirements for MRFs
- Keep focus on beverage containers; don’t blur lines with overall recycling (opposite point of view also expressed: why limit the discussion to UBCs?)
- **Brand owners** have a track record of success in marketing
- **Governments** can deliver message about missed economic opportunities when recycling system underperforming – continue to emphasize the value of material in the waste stream
- **State government** should view collected solid waste revenues as a resource, and better dedicate and target these revenues toward recycling
- **Governments** should look for ways to reduce the cost of the recycling system
- System should make recycling as convenient as wasting
- By subsidizing waste, we’re preventing getting to zero waste (or close). Goal is to stop paying for waste. **Manufacturers** should accept some responsibility; **governments** should demonstrate willingness to partner with manufacturers to achieve the goal.

Next Steps

Additional ideas on the topics of this meeting should be sent via email to Wayne and Brad by October 17.

The data collection group will meet via telephone to identify options on how to create surrogate numbers or indicators that can be used for metrics.
Participants should identify 2-4 priority areas for moving forward, and note if the suggestion is specific to one state. These should be sent to Wayne and Brad by October 17.

Plan is to meet again in mid-November. MPCA and WDNR will develop straw-man proposals, i.e., activities and potential roles/responsibilities.