

# MPCA solid waste updates – Fall 2020

**Financial assistance** (Jeannie Given)

## Environmental Assistance Loan Program

The Environmental Assistance (EA) Loan Program is a revolving fund program whereby additional financial assistance is made available as past recipients repay their loans. The EA loan program is accepting applications on a continuous basis. Loans are awarded throughout the calendar year, based on the availability of program funds and are available to Minnesota-based small to medium businesses and political subdivisions of Minnesota.

## Environmental Assistance grants

New this year, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) will publish individual Request for Proposals (RFP) under the EA Grant Program. The EA Program has three focus areas this biennium fiscal year (FY)2020 – 2021:

1. Climate adaptation grant round (closed to applications)
2. Toxicity reduction grant round (opens September 15, 2020)
3. Regional planning in solid waste grant round (anticipated November 2020)

Sign up for EA grants email updates to be notified of future grant opportunities.

## Greater MN Recycling and Composting Program

The Greater MN Recycling and Composting Program is currently evaluating applications received from the FY2020 Request for Proposals. FY2021 RFPs is anticipated to open for applications in Fall 2020.

## SCORE disbursements

First disbursements will be disbursed October 2020 to eligible counties. Grant agreements have been executed through FY2021. Executed grant agreements for FY2022 – FY2025 disbursements will be sent to authorized signers beginning Spring 2021.

## Solid Waste Processing Facilities Capital Assistance Grant

Solid Waste Processing Facilities Capital Assistance Grant (CAP) provides financial and technical assistance to local governments to encourage investment in the proper management of solid waste. Currently, a bonding bill has not been appropriated in FY2020.

## Prevention of Wasted Food and Food Rescue Grant Program (Colleen Hetzel, Kayla Walsh, and Annika Bergen)

- The Prevention of Wasted Food and Food Rescue grants provide financial assistance for the development of programs that can help prevent food from being wasted and/or promote food rescue (food to people).

- The MPCA is currently evaluating the first round of grant applications for the FY2020 RFPs. Approximately \$500,000 was available to organizations with project proposals.
- There is funding available for an additional RFP. For notification of the issuance of the next Prevention of Wasted Food and Food Rescue grant sign up at [https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/MNPCA/subscriber/new?gsp=MNPCA\\_1](https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/MNPCA/subscriber/new?gsp=MNPCA_1).

Recycling Market Development Grant Program (See update in “Recycling Market Development Projects” below)

## Policy and planning

### Metropolitan solid waste planning (Peder Sandhei and Melissa Peck)

#### Metro Policy Plan

The Metropolitan Solid Waste Management Policy Plan (Metro Policy Plan) establishes the plan for managing the Metropolitan Area’s solid waste. The Policy Plan is prepared every six years with input from state agencies, county staff, and a variety of stakeholders: representatives of the waste industry, environmental groups, businesses, and citizens. The current plan covers 2016 – 2036 and is updated every six years with the next plan update due by December of 2022.

Once adopted, the Metro Policy Plan sets in motion the process for counties to develop the more detailed county master plans. These plans address the specific projects and programs to be implemented within the counties to meet the goals, policies, and objectives of the Metro Policy Plan.

Any solid waste activity within the Metropolitan Area must be consistent with the Policy Plan and the county master plans.

The MPCA will begin the process for developing the new Metro Policy Plan in April of 2021 and will be reaching out to counties and other stakeholders soon to gather input.

#### Certificate of Need

The MPCA recently issued a notice that Certificate of Need (CON) applications are currently being accepted for facilities that wish to expand and can apply for more mixed municipal solid waste (MMSW) capacity. This application window is open for 180 days which ends on January 18, 2021. Once all applications are received, MPCA will review all applications at the same time to determine need for expansion at each landfill located within the Metro Area.

#### Restriction on Disposal

The MPCA is in ongoing litigation regarding landfill compliance with Restriction on Disposal (ROD). The MPCA has a favorable ruling from the Court of Appeals, but is still working on a settlement agreement with the affiliated parties. Once the case is settled, MPCA will provide summary information to the counties.

### Greater Minnesota solid waste planning (Danielle Drussell and Heidi Ringhofer)

The MPCA will be sending out a survey to verify county solid waste contact information that we have on file in the fourth quarter of 2020, contact updates can be made within the survey. Once the survey is complete, any future contact changes should be updated using the [Contact Change Form](#). This is part of the MPCA 2020 initiative to update Minnesota solid waste contacts.

# Sustainable Materials Management

## Sustainable building and materials (Melissa Wenzel, Colleen Hetzel, and Annika Bergen)

- Two advisory groups have been meeting every 3-6 weeks for the past year, developing recommendations to improve environmental protections for construction and demolition (C&D) landfills and to improve the sustainability of the state's building sector. The [Sustainable Building Group's](#) final meeting is on September 30. The workgroup started with over 90 ideas that have narrowed to six final recommendations for building material management systems change.
  - If you are interested in receiving updates on the advisory groups' work, **sign up** for the GovDelivery newsletter. Look for the "receive information and updates" box on the right.
- A C&D waste characterization study was completed at the end of June, and is in its final round of revisions. The final report is anticipated to release fall 2020.
- EPA Region 5 staff are holding quarterly conference calls to share, learn, and collaborate on similar built environment issues, initiatives and solutions. The next conference call is slated for October 2020.

## Sustainable Materials Management - Prevention and Reuse (Colleen Hetzel, Kayla Walsh, and Annika Bergen)

- Sustainable Materials Management (SMM) is a more holistic framework, expanding solid waste efforts to consider the full life cycle impacts that materials have on the environment and human health.
- The MPCA is working on creating more resources and offering support for programs interested in learning more about SMM and prioritizing staff time/resources on prevention and reuse programming.
- Reach out if you have questions or would like to have a conversation about SMM and how it can fit into your work and programming.

## Recycling (Jennifer Nguyen Moore and Kayla Walsh)

### Capture rates (Barbara Monaco)

- MPCA is working to incorporate material capture rates as an additional measure to recycling rates in order to quantify efforts and set targets for handling materials more sustainably. Capture rates allow steps to be taken to improve the recycling program based on what is not being captured, and identify opportunities to reduce and reuse more.
- Next steps include calculating the environmental impacts of certain material types. The goal is to move away from reporting solely on the weight of materials collected, and ultimately reduce the environmental impact of the materials consumed in Minnesota.

## Sustainable purchasing (Melissa Peck and Annika Bergen)

- The Sustainable Procurement Program is a partnership between the Minnesota Department of Administration (MDA) and the MPCA. Its mission is to use the purchasing power of state government to push the market toward sustainability. Incorporating sustainability into contracts drives economic prosperity, improves social well-being, and reduces impacts on the environment.
- In 2019, 21.1% of state government purchasing was sustainable — up from 16.6% in FY18; and 47% of priority contracts are 100% sustainable. This saved more than:
  - 4,500 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>e
  - 9 million gallons of water
  - 4,800 MWh of energy
  - \$561,547 in lifetime costs

- Reach out if you would like to learn more about sustainable purchasing, implementing a sustainable purchasing policy, or joining the GREEN Group (informal network of environmental and purchasing staff from county and city governments). You can also learn about the impact of sustainable purchasing in the [FY19 Sustainable Purchasing Annual Update](#).

## Recycling Education Committee (Kayla Walsh)

### Resources include

Recycling Outreach guide, hosted by Recycling Association of Minnesota (RAM) updated July 2020.

Recycling Education Toolkit, hosted by Waste Wise includes translated signs and social media into five different languages, a signmaker tool, videos on top contaminants, newsletter blurbs on top contaminants, billing inserts, cart tags, and more.

### About the Recycling Education Committee

The Recycling Education Committee (REC) is a group of stakeholders that meets quarterly with the goal of increasing recycling and reducing recycling contamination by building consensus around recycling education and communication. Starting in June 2016, representatives from haulers, cities, counties, the state, and other regional organizations and associations began discussions around how to improve recycling efficiency throughout the state of Minnesota. The purpose of the group is to seek understanding from key stakeholders on recyclable and compostable materials, build consensus on what is universally acceptable/not acceptable, and agree on consistent messaging to communicate in an efficient and coordinated fashion throughout the state. In the group's quarterly meetings, REC members collaborated to craft a "Always/Never in the Curbside Bin" list and identified other priority recycling messages to help guide future campaigns/outreach. Those messaging priorities are:

- No Bags and Un-Bag Your Recyclables
- Back To Basics (No Wishcycling; Here's How the System Works Info-Graphic)
- Stop Hazards (lithium batteries, etc.)
- Universal Cart Tags and Trainings
- Shredded Paper

The REC is currently working with The Recycling Partnership to create statewide messaging for Minnesota, with funding through a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Environmental Education Grant. REC is also working on a [Recycling Outreach Guide](#) that recycling professionals and educators across Minnesota may use to inform their recycling outreach tools.

For questions or if you are interested in joining REC, please contact Kayla Walsh, MPCA, [kayla.walsh@state.mn.us](mailto:kayla.walsh@state.mn.us).

## Organics (Kayla Walsh and Tim Farnan)

COVID-related resources and updates: <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/covid-19/solid-waste>

[COVID-19 Information for recycling and composting facilities \(w-sw11-03\)](#)

This fact sheet outlines current information about COVID-19 and best practices for continuing operation of a solid waste facility during the COVID-19 outbreak. (MDH and MPCA)

[Webex: Solid waste industry best practices for safety during the COVID-19 outbreak](#)

Recorded session worker health and safety (1 hour).

Due to health concerns related to COVID-19, MPCA utilized regulatory flexibility to allow limited land disposal of some source-separated organics. MPCA has since engaged stakeholders on an ongoing basis to find solutions to continue operating during the pandemic, with minimal disruptions and proper health and safety measures.

## **Minnesota GreenCorps** (Tim Farnan and Colleen Hetzel)

Thirteen Waste Prevention, Recycling and Organics Management (WPROM) GreenCorps members are starting at their host sites in mid-September and will serve for 11 months. Host sites for the 20-21 program year include: Becker County, Carver County, City of Duluth, City of Minneapolis, City of Shorewood, College of St Benedict, Hennepin County, Minneapolis Public Schools, the MPCA, Prairie Island Indian Community, Second Harvest Heartland and Second Harvest Northern Lakes Food Banks.

The agency anticipates seeking applications for host sites for the 21-22 program year in the early spring of 2021. Sign up to be updated when host site applications are sought here (under the 'learn more' tab):

<https://www.pca.state.mn.us/waste/minnesota-greencorps>

## **Recycling market development projects** (Wayne Gjerde, Susan Heffron, and Jennifer Nguyen Moore)

### **Local market conditions and challenges**

Green Forest Recycling LLC is building a mixed paper recycling facility in Brainerd that will process bales of mixed paper into different grades for further resale. This facility will optically sort paper. The initial phase of this facility will be operational in October 2020. This was funded through a loan by the MPCA.

Choice Plastics in Mound has received a loan from the MPCA to install plastic processing equipment. Start-up date to be determined.

Verso Paper Company in Duluth closed their entire plant (virgin and recycling) at the end of July 2020. They were recycling old corrugated cardboard cuttings from box making into kraft paper and were hoping to expand this operation when the parent company decided to close this site.

Gerda Ameristeel closed its recycling steel portion of their facility at the end of June 2020.

Brotex no longer accepts carpet from Minnesota sources for recycling. No outlet currently to recycle carpet generated in Minnesota.

Grocery and other retail chains are beginning to accept plastic film again.

Ag Plastic grant with MDA and RAM completed May 2020. Contact Susan Heffron for the final report.

### **Grant money**

The first grant round for Recycling Market Development has been awarded. Staff is currently working with grantees on finalizing workplan and budgets. Anticipated start dates are October 2020. Grant awards cannot be revealed until all grant agreements are executed. Next RFP for the remainder of the grant funds (\$400K) will be published fall 2020.

### **Pricing**

- PET, aluminum cans, and steel cans are materials that usually keep their value, but they have fallen in recent months.
- PET baled: 13.5 cents/pound in 8/19: 8.25 cents/pound in 8/20
- Aluminum cans baled: 55 cents/pound in 8/19: 41 cents/pound in 8/20
- Steel cans: \$140/ton in 8/19: \$100/ton in 8/20

### **Other material pricing**

- OCC: \$30/ton in 8/19: \$55/ton in 8/20 but was \$115 in May 2020
- Mixed paper: -\$2.50/ton in 8/19: \$20/ton in 8/20
- Mixed glass: -\$12.50/ton in 8/19: -\$25/ton in 8/20
- Natural HDPE: \$25.50/ton in 8/19: \$52.50/ton in 8/20
- Colored HDPE: \$10.50/ton in 8/19: \$4.50/ton in 8/20
- Information from Recyclingmarkets.net Midwest/Central Region

## Market Development Working Group

Subgroups on Glass, Mixed paper, Organics were formed and continue to work on strategies for markets in these areas. Working Group expires in November 2020, but will have conversations in August about work yet to be done and how to accomplish this.

## Landfills

### Demolition landfills (Courtney Ahlers-Nelson)

- The fall of 2018, the MPCA initiated rulemaking to address the observed impacts from unlined construction and demolition debris landfills.
- In June 2019, the MPCA solicited for members of the Rule Advisory Panel. Sixteen panel members from a variety of stakeholder groups were selected. The initial meeting of the Rule Advisory Panel was in October 2019.
- In October 2019, the MPCA completed a Report on Unlined Landfilling of Construction and Demolition Debris. The completion of the report included a peer review by the EPA, USGS and Ohio EPA.
- Since 2019, a total of seven private off-site wells at three different demo landfills have been identified as having Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) drinking water advisories for contamination found above MDH drinking water thresholds.

<https://www.pca.state.mn.us/waste/construction-and-demolition-landfills-groundwater>

<https://www.pca.state.mn.us/waste/construction-and-demolition-landfills-groundwater-data>

### Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (Beth Gawrys)

- Eight county MMSW landfills manage leachate through land application.
- Groundwater monitoring at four land application sites have exceeded MDH Health Risk Limits, and groundwater monitoring at five sites are not achieving reporting limits that enable compliance determinations.
- Several municipal solid waste (MSW) landfills that land apply leachate are researching pretreatment methods to develop a treatment for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) compounds.
- PFAS is now an area of focus for several states and the EPA.
- The MPCA is looking at PFAS across programs and media (wastewater treatment plants, bio solids, closed landfill, etc.) to reduce impacts to groundwater, surface water and air and for consistency.

## Reporting

### SCORE reporting (Ben Crowell)

SCORE reporting is due on April 1 of each calendar year. Delays in data submission will delay the annual SCORE report, which is now in an interactive format on the MPCA webpage.

- SCORE reporting deadline was extended to June 1, 2020, due to regulatory flexibility requests due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.
  - This extension will impact the publish date of the 2019 SCORE report but the MPCA is still looking at a publish date in Quarter 4 of 2020.
- When logging into their SCORE account in Re-TRAC, counties can go to the analytics tab and view the hauler report for their county.
  - For Metro counties, this report is only available for 2019 data and beyond due to the large changes made to the Metro reporting forms, but previous years are **available by request to the MPCA**.

## Hauler reporting (Peder Sandhei)

- Reminder: All haulers of MSW and recyclable materials must report to the MPCA. The reporting cycle for haulers operating in Greater Minnesota is annual and is due February 1 of each calendar year. For haulers operating in the Metro, reporting is quarterly.
- Counties are responsible for submitting accurate hauler license lists to the MPCA every year as part of their SCORE Report.
- If haulers operating in your county have not reported to MPCA, the county is responsible for providing waste and destination information to the MPCA on SCORE surveys, as was done in the past.
- For Metro county reporting, the collected and delivered forms have been combined and are entered for each county on a quarterly basis at a city level.
- Compliance numbers have been determined based on the 2019 license lists provided by the counties through SCORE reporting and the 2019 Hauler Reporting forms.
  - Out of the 473 unique licensed haulers as reporting by the counties, 288 (39.1%) did not report tonnage for 2019.

## Solid waste facility annual reports (Lisa Mojsiej, Scott Parr, and Shelly Siewert)

- The annual report submittal is a three-part process:
  1. Completing all assigned forms in Re-TRAC – which includes waste volume information along with facility operations data.
  2. Submitting monitoring data to EQulS. This step is only for facilities that are required to submit environmental monitoring data including groundwater, surface water, leachate, gas, and soil monitoring results.
  3. Submitting a complete electronic file copy including all additional information required by your permit.
- Annual reports were due by February 1, 2020, for open and closed landfills, waste processing facilities, waste tire facilities, transfer stations, case-specific beneficial use determinations, and demonstration research projects.
- Annual reports were due by March 1, 2020, for recycling facilities, and composting facilities.
- 2019 Solid Waste Annual Report cycle: two new forms were added that were required to be completed by all facilities:
  - **Counties served:** this form is an updated version of the previous form of the same name but breaks down the waste received into individual waste streams by county of origin.
  - **Recycling activity – other:** Additional questions were added to the Recycling Activity – Other form to better understand the universe of waste processors and material recovery facilities and the level of contamination we are encountering at these facilities.
- The Annual Report Submittal form was updated for 2019 in an effort to reduce the duplication of data entry required by facilities and provide instructions on the submittal of the required file copy to the MPCA via Sharebase. There are still facilities that are not submitting the file copy to the MPCA, which is a violation of their permit.
- For reporting year 2019, report reviews have been completed and resulted in the following responses:
  - 55 acknowledgement letters (Annual report was complete).
  - 132 reminder letters (Annual reports had non-crucial information missing).
  - 60 Letter of Warnings/Notice of Violations (failure to submit a file copy, exceeded throughput limits, failed to submit summary of contingency actions/emergency/closure plans).

- There is no formal review of the Permit-by-Rule (PBR) facilities this year. Shelly Siewert will review as time permits. The focus is on those PBR facilities who have not done anything in ReTRAC = 40 facilities as of March 10, 2020.

## Product stewardship

### E-waste (Amanda Cotton and Matthew Webb)

- Review of PY13 (Program Year 13: July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020) data has begun.
- PY13 manufacturer recycling obligation is 21,678,766 pounds which is likely to be relatively close to the total pounds recycled in PY13, though the 1.5 multiplier for non-metro pounds has returned in PY13.

The MPCA has provided technical assistance on proposed language from the counties that the Product Stewardship Council will review with Solid Waste Administrator's Association.

### Solar panels (Amanda Cotton)

- To prepare Minnesota for the stream of 21 million solar panels in the coming years, the MPCA has started a stakeholder process organized with the Minnesota Department of Commerce and Minnesota Solar Energy Industries Association. The goal of the stakeholder process is to collaborate to develop and implement PV panel end-of-life management policy and programs that conserve resources, protect health, promote renewable energy, and support PV panel recycling infrastructure and technology.
- MPCA just completed a year's worth of WebEx meetings with those in the industry, government, and the public in general. The last two meetings went over Product Stewardship 101, the additional solar panel criteria under EPEAT and reviewed the survey results for four potential solar panel EOL management options. In late 2020, the MPCA will continue to narrow down the options with the goal for policy language by 2025.

### Paint (Matthew Webb)

- Household hazardous waste (HHW) collection: shutdowns led to almost zero statewide collection in April and May with collection volumes increasing significantly in June. The January-June 2020 reporting period saw collection decrease by approximately 25% relative to the same period in 2019.
- Almost all HHW sites are now back open, though some with reduced hours.
- Retail collection: Almost all paint and local hardware stores are back open and accepting collection.
- January 2021: PaintCare financial review of fee assessment levels and impact due. Has made MPCA aware of desire to discuss potential changes to the program plan at this time.
- Amazon in Fridley is shipping paint to Oklahoma for processing into paint as well as for the usual use as alternative daily cover. Result of surpluses due to increased collection.

### COVID summary (Heidi Kroening and Mark Rust)

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## Contacts

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