



REUSABLE NEWS



EPA Employees Pledge To "Break the Paper Chain!"

EPA is no different from any other office in terms of the amount of paper it uses—too much. Paper makes up about 38 percent of all municipal solid waste (MSW) before recycling. Office paper is the third largest category of paper waste, after corrugated cardboard and newspapers. To reduce the amount of paper it uses, EPA has launched the Paper-Less Office Campaign. While recycling is already a way of life at EPA, focusing on reducing paper waste on the job will help EPA employees follow the Agency's own solid waste management hierarchy, which makes waste prevention the top priority.

On Earth Day, EPA Administrator Carol Browner kicked off the Paper-Less Office

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The Greening of the White House

In March, less than a year after announcing that the White House should be a symbol of a clean environment, President Clinton unveiled the first Action Plan for his project, "The Greening of the White House." The initial phase of the "Greening" project, which will serve as a model for government, businesses, and households, consists of 50 practical steps that the White House is taking to cut waste, improve energy efficiency, and save money.

The 50 actions were proposed by a team of experts who performed an energy and environmental "audit" of the White House and the Old Executive Office Building (OEOB). The team included EPA employees, as well as representatives from other federal agencies and the District of Columbia government. The actions that the team recommended and the White House adopted range from installing energy-efficient lighting to minimizing pesticide use, and include several model initiatives for

preventing waste, recycling, composting, and buying recycled.

Preventing waste. An internal source-reduction policy will be established for workers at the Executive Complex, which includes both the White House and the OEOB. This policy will set forth guidelines for reducing paper consumption, using durable products, and conserving office supplies, in addition to encouraging greater use of electronic communications such as paperless electronic mail and faxing. The source-reduction policy will mesh well with ongoing efforts

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"We're going to identify what it takes to make the White House a model for efficiency and waste reduction, and then we're going to get the job done.... Before I ask you to do the best you can in your house, I ought to make sure I'm doing the best I can in my house."

President Clinton

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The Greening of the White House

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to maintain the historical significance and grandeur of the Executive Complex. For example, when repairs or maintenance are needed at the White House, contractors currently remove and restore existing building materials, rather than purchase new materials. This is precisely the sort of practice that the internal source-reduction policy will encourage.

Recycling. Under the Action Plan, steps will be taken to improve and increase recycling throughout the Executive Complex. Outreach and education for staff will boost existing recycling efforts. New collection bins will be more prominently placed, and OEOB management will collect polystyrene dishes and utensils from the cafeteria for recycling. (Eventually, the cafeteria might move to reusable, nondisposable dishware.) A household battery collection program for employees also will be added. Finally, in the Living Quarters of the White House, the First Family received recycling bins—and began using them—in February.

Composting. The 18 acres of gardens and lawns surrounding the White House are extensive and constantly maintained, making yard trimmings a major component of the Executive Complex's waste stream. To manage these materials, the groundskeeping staff is already practicing "grasscycling" (leaving grass trimmings on the lawn as mulch instead of raking, bagging, and tossing them). In addition, the use of offsite composting facilities to handle yard trimmings and other organic wastes will be expanded.

Buying recycled. President Clinton's running track, which is composed of rubber recovered from used tires and windshield wipers, is a well-known part of White House efforts to encourage "Buying Recycled." To stimulate markets for recyclables and encourage recovery of materials, staff at the Executive Complex will fully comply with Executive Order 12873, which directs agencies to purchase recycled paper with at least 20 percent postconsumer content. Staff also will purchase additional supplies made from recovered materials whenever possible, using the guidance of EPA's proposed Comprehensive Procurement Guideline.

Cleaner government, better government. The Greening of the White House will help President Clinton meet one of his major goals: proving that cleaner government and better government are synonymous. The President has made it clear that all actions taken under this project to protect the environment must also save taxpayers money. In addition, many of the Greening projects will enhance worker health and productivity (e.g., through innovations such as time-saving electronic mail and reduced-glare lighting). As such, the Greening of the White House will serve as a practical model for people across the nation who are ready to make economical environmental changes in their households and businesses.

For more information on the Greening of the White House, contact Brian Johnson of the White House Office on Environmental Policy at 202 456-6224. ☐

EPA Employees Pledge To "Break the Paper Chain!"

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Campaign by asking all EPA employees to join her in taking a pledge to reduce paper use.

Employees can fulfill this pledge by following basic paper-conserving techniques such as two-sided copying and use of electronic communications. The Campaign also encourages each of EPA's 47 offices and laboratories to adopt a specific strategy for paring down paper use. Many ideas are being tested, from purging mailing lists of duplicates and old entries to using paperless electronic mail instead of distributing "hard" copies of interoffice memos. Progress will be measured by tracking the number of monthly photocopy impressions logged by each office and by the number of employees in each office who pledge to participate.

The 1994 goal of the campaign is to reduce Agencywide paper consumption by 15 percent. If that goal is achieved, EPA Headquarters alone will save up to 21 million sheets of paper and over \$100,000! Each year EPA will continue to identify new waste reduction challenges and to set higher goals for itself. EPA hopes that the Paper-Less Office Campaign will not only reduce paper consumption internally, but also serve as a model for other federal agencies and private firms.



EPA Administrator Carol Browner gets some help "breaking the paper chain" on Earth Day.

FTC Enforces Truth in Environmental Advertising

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) is on the lookout for misleading messages about the environmental impact of products and packages. Since 1990, FTC has been identifying manufacturers that incorrectly claim their products are ozone-friendly, environmentally safe, biodegradable, compostable, recycled, or recyclable. To date, over 25 companies making unsubstantiated environmental marketing claims about their products have faced legal action.

FTC issued a set of principles and examples as guidelines on environmental advertising and marketing to set the standard for environmental claims. Developed in 1992 with the help of EPA, the guidelines are designed to provide consumers with accurate information when making environmental purchasing decisions. The guidelines are also intended to provide marketers with clear instructions for making valid environmental claims. Even though the guidelines are not law, they reflect FTC's interpretation of the Federal Trade Commission Act, which prohibits deceptive practices affecting commerce. By adhering to the guidelines, companies can avoid making false or deceptive claims.

The guidelines cover recyclability and recycled content in detail. Unless a product or package is made from 100 percent recycled material, the amount of recycled material contained in the product or package must be identified. Similarly, claims of recyclability should be qualified to address the limited availability of recycling programs, unless collection sites exist for a substantial majority of consumers.

Next year, FTC will review the guidelines to ensure that they evolve along with manufacturing techniques and environmental advertising practices. As part of the review process, FTC plans to open the guidelines to public comment. To get involved or for more information, contact Mike Dershowitz of FTC at 202 326-3158, or Robin Moran of EPA at 202 260-5066 to obtain a copy of the FTC guidelines or written information.

FTC Actions

Following are examples of FTC actions against dubious recyclable/recycled content product claims:

- A fast-food company was cited for claims concerning the recyclability of its paper food containers. The paper displayed the three chasing arrows symbol, as well as the word "recyclable." However, since very few facilities accept food-contaminated paper for recycling, most consumers cannot recycle this packaging.
- A manufacturer of a cellulose adhesive tape was challenged for a hard plastic dispenser and paperboard backcard labeled "biodegradable" tape and

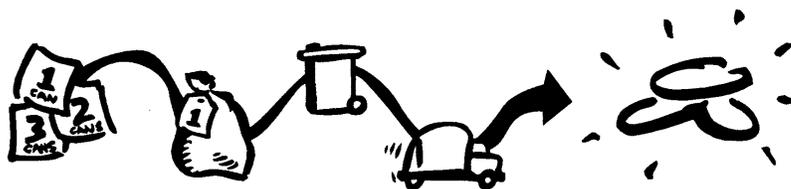
"recyclable packaging." Although the tape dispenser and backcard are capable of being recycled, most consumers cannot recycle them because only a few collection facilities nationwide accept the nonfoam polystyrene dispenser and noncorrugated paperboard package. In addition, the tape does not meet FTC's definition of biodegradability since, after ordinary use, it does not completely break down and return to nature within a reasonably short period.

In both cases, companies promptly agreed to change their claims to prevent consumer deception.

Pay-As-You-Throw:

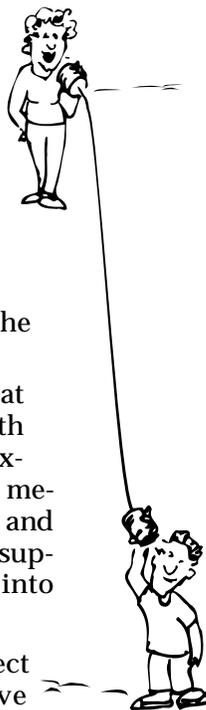
There's a new trend in communities today. Citizens are paying for trash services based on the amount of waste they generate. The less they toss, the less they pay. (And the less waste that cities and towns must manage.)

To find out if pay-as-you-throw could make sense in your community, call the RCRA Hotline at 800-424-9346 and ask for EPA's free guide entitled *Pay-As-You-Throw: Lessons Learned About Unit Pricing* (EPA530-R-94-004).



EPA It's Making Cents.

Steel Recycling CANpaign Opened



The Steel Recycling Institute (SRI) is offering to recycling programs across the country a high-impact media “CANpaign” designed to get the word out on the recyclability of steel cans.

The Steel Recycling CANpaign is targeted at recycling programs that need assistance with their public education efforts. It provides flexible, creative outreach materials, as well as a media kit containing tips on free media outlets and marketing tools. SRI hopes that this effort to support community education will translate into increased steel recycling rates nationwide.

Many community recycling programs collect steel cans, and steel boasts an impressive industry-wide recycling rate. But with improved public information, even more steel can be recovered. For example, some consumers think that tin cans are not recyclable even though most tin cans are primarily composed of recyclable steel. In addition, some consumers do not know that properly emptied and prepared aerosol and paint cans can be recycled in many communities.

Most of the CANpaign materials are made from reused or recycled materials and/or designed to be recycled. Posters are printed on the back of government surplus maps, television public service announcements are made up of old film clips, and press materials are packaged in a recycled steel box. The campaign also features bus posters, billboards, and radio advertisements. A common focus of these materials is teaching consumers to identify steel products that can be recycled.

In addition to providing CANpaign materials to community recycling programs, SRI is also helping communities across the country organize recycling campaigns. To do this, SRI brings together organizations that can donate personnel and help secure press time, such as local governments, businesses, and media sources. For example, SRI is currently working with the Washington, DC, Council of Governments, federal agencies such as EPA, and large businesses in the Washington, DC, area to launch a local CANpaign that will start in September. SRI has supported over 25 similar CANpaigns this year; one in Ventura County, California, resulted in a 21-percent increase in the amount of steel collected by the County’s recycling program.

SRI is an industry-sponsored association with the mission of promoting and sustaining steel recycling in the United States. For more information on the Steel Recycling CANpaign, write to the Steel Recycling Institute, Public Service Program, 680 Andersen Drive, Pittsburgh, PA 15220-2700, or call 800 876-7274. 

Information Exchange Acts as Waste Prevention Switchboard

Did you ever wish you had instant access to information on waste prevention methods? The California Integrated Waste Management Board has established an information exchange service to collect and distribute materials in the ever-changing world of waste prevention. The “Info Exchange” is a free service that provides assistance to government agencies, professional associations, industry, small businesses, citizen groups, and other interested parties on all aspects of waste prevention.

The Info Exchange currently covers more than 200 waste prevention topics and can offer information such as:

- Waste assessments, case studies, and money-saving tips for businesses.
- Guides, handbooks, and household hints for consumers.
- Program ideas for local, state, and federal governments.
- Lists and case studies of materials exchanges.
- Instructions on backyard composting, xeriscaping (dry climate landscaping), and other organic methods.
- Information on aseptic packaging, wire-bound boxes, and alternative packaging.
- Analysis of waste reduction and program effectiveness.

The Info Exchange’s database contains hundreds of documents, including articles, case studies, reports, and sample outreach materials. Just call, fax, or send electronic mail to the Info Exchange with your information request, and include your name, address, and phone number. Out-of-state requests will be handled as staff time permits.

In addition to distributing materials, the Info Exchange is seeking new materials. If you’ve completed a project and have measurable results or lessons to share with others, contact the Info Exchange. Send materials to Waste Prevention Info Exchange, c/o Kathy Frevert, 8800 Cal Center Drive, Sacramento, CA 95826; call 916 255-INFO; fax 916 255-2220; or send electronic mail on Internet to kfrevert@wpe.ciwmb.ca.gov. 



Taking Action

"Taking Action" is a *Reusable News* feature that spotlights the everyday efforts of individuals to reduce, reuse, and recycle in the home, office, and community. If you know of anyone who has made an innovative contribution to meeting the municipal solid waste challenge, but not as part of an environmental profession, please write to John Leigh, *Reusable News*, Office of Solid Waste, U.S. EPA (5305), 401 M Street, SW., Washington, DC 20460.

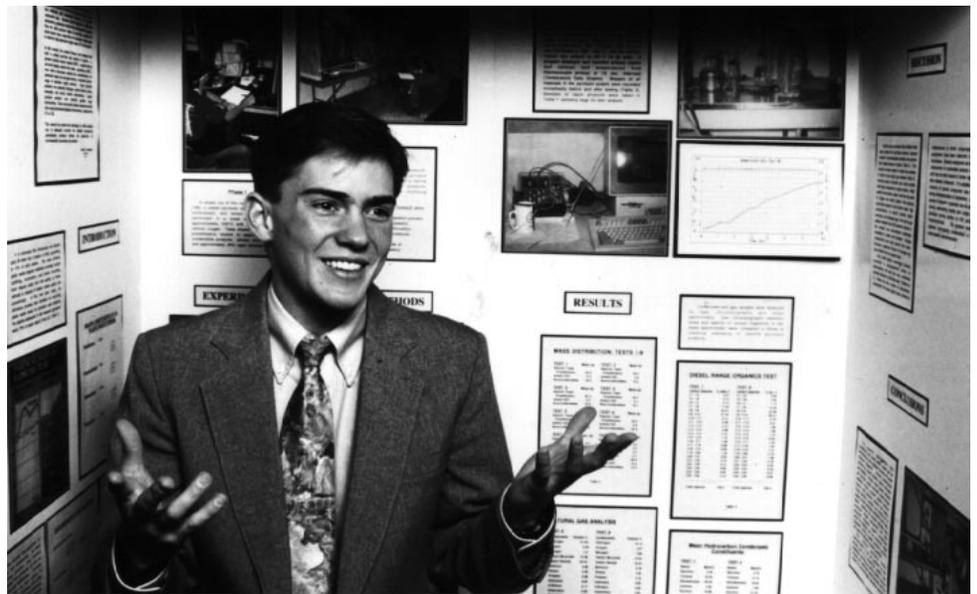
Recycling Whiz Takes Top Prize in High-Stakes Science Competition

A budding recycling engineer won first place in the prestigious Westinghouse Science Talent Search. Forrest Anderson, who was a senior at Helena High School in Helena, Montana, at the time of the competition, designed and built a system that breaks down plastics into their original chemical elements, which can then be recovered and reused. The project earned the 18-year-old a \$40,000 college scholarship.

Anderson's system is designed to address one of the major challenges associated with plastics recycling: the need for source separation. Most recyclers must sort plastics before beginning the decomposition and recovery process because different types of plastics often break down into incompatible by-products. Anderson's innovative system combines two methods of plastics recovery to yield usable, uniform products.

The first technology used in Anderson's system is a common method of recovering plastics called thermal decomposition. This technology melts plastic into a broad range of gases, liquids, and solids (e.g., waxes, greases, and oils). The second technology, catalytic decomposition, further breaks down solids into a narrow range of liquids and gases. By combining the two processes, Anderson is able to decompose mixed plastics into useful, consistent products that can be refined into fuel or recovered into new plastic resins.

Anderson believes that his system could prove invaluable to smaller communities that want to recover



Forrest Anderson, winner of the Westinghouse Science Talent Search.

plastics. "Because it can process mixed plastics and even handle most contamination from labels and leftover food, this operation could save small municipalities the cost of running a sorting facility," he said. "In addition, it is compact enough that it could be mounted on a trailer and moved between recycling sites."

Although the project took two years for Anderson to complete, he has not spent all his high school days laboring in a laboratory. In fact, Anderson also has managed to rank first in his class of 318 and to captain the wrestling and cross-country teams. He plans to bring his wide range of talents to Harvard University this fall, where he will study chemistry, physics, or psychology.

The Westinghouse Talent Search is the nation's oldest high school science competition. Five of its past finalists have gone on to win Nobel Prizes, and nine have received MacArthur Foundation Fellowships. This year's winners were chosen from a field of over 1,500 entries. The 40 finalists, who shared \$205,000 in scholarship money, traveled to Washington, DC, in March to present their projects to a panel of eight distinguished scientists. ♻️

EPA Program Sustains the

EPA is proud to introduce "Recover America" a new program designed to bolster waste prevention and recycling in the United States. Recover America consists of two companion initiatives: "Recycling Means Business" and "Waste Prevention Pays." These initiatives seek to shift our reliance on a society that is resource- and energy-intensive to one that reuses and recycles materials to the fullest extent possible. EPA is conducting a number of activities under each initiative, ranging from "Jobs Through Recycling," which will help create jobs in the recycling industry (see *Reusable News*, Spring 1994), to "WasteWiSe," which challenges American companies to reduce waste, recycle, and buy or manufacture materials made with recycled content (see update on opposite page). Watch future issues of *Reusable News* to learn more about the exciting new activities being launched under Recover America.

EPA's New Recycling Strategy Breaks Down Market Barriers

Over 6,600 curbside collection programs currently contribute to the economic and environmental well-being of communities across the nation. The long-term success of these programs, however, depends on the development and expansion of *markets* for recyclable materials.

Markets include businesses that process collected materials or re-manufacture recyclables into new products. Although recycling programs have grown rapidly over the last decade, the markets for products made from collected materials have not always kept pace with supply.

In some cases, industry has not been able to make the conversion to recycled raw materials quickly enough to keep up with the supply of recyclables. For those products that are made with recycled content, businesses and entrepreneurs

can face a different barrier: convincing consumers to purchase their products. In addition, financing for all kinds of recycling enterprises can be difficult to secure.

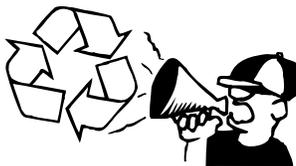
To stimulate recycling markets and to promote economic sustainability, EPA Headquarters and its 10 regional offices crafted "Recycling Means Business," a strategy that incorporates input from more than 100 parties representing public and private recycling and economic development interests. The overall objective of the strategy is to identify and overcome technical, financial, marketing, and logistical barriers to market development.

The specific goals of Recycling Means Business are to 1) support and strengthen the link between increased market capacity and sustainable economic growth, 2) leverage resources and build partnerships at the federal level for market development, and 3) develop infrastructures that support markets for recyclables and products with recycled content (see box on opposite page for more details).

EPA is engaged in several projects to boost demand for recycled products. Acting as a catalyst within the federal government, EPA is working with other federal agencies to in-

crease government purchasing of products with recycled content. The Agency also has streamlined procurement guidelines to designate 21 items, from ink toner cartridges to carpet, that federal agencies must purchase with the highest percentage of recovered materials practicable. As part of the procurement guidelines, EPA published a Recovered Materials Advisory Notice that recommends practices and ranges of recovered materials content levels to facilitate the procurement process.

In an effort to leverage federal resources to help expand the nation's recycling infrastructure, EPA has joined with the Economic Development Administration in the U.S. Department of Commerce and with the Northeast Recycling Council to convene workshops in September that will explore methods for increasing investment in recycling processing and manufacturing systems. In addition, EPA will distribute \$2.74 million in grants as part of its Jobs Through Recycling Initiative. This money will be used to establish Recycling and Reuse Business Assistance Centers and to support Recycling Economic Development Advocates. EPA is also working with the National Institute of Standards and Technology to develop a national recycling



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technology network. EPA is seeking additional partnerships with federal agencies to further strengthen the nation's recycling infrastructure.

Outside the federal government, EPA teamed with the Environmental Defense Fund and the Ad Council to produce public service announcements on "buying recycled." EPA is also supporting the U.S. Conference of Mayor's Buy Recycled Campaign, which facilitates the purchase of recycled

products by local governments.

By joining forces with public and private sectors to break down barriers and build bridges, EPA is promoting the development of mature recycling markets that will permanently close the recycling loop. For more information on Recycling Means Business, contact Lillian Bagus at 202 260-4058, or call EPA's RCRA Hotline at 800 424-9346. ♻️

"Recycling Means Business" Strategy Goals

- **Support and strengthen the link between increased market capacity and sustainable economic growth.** Through leadership and advocacy, EPA will demonstrate that environmental protection and economic prosperity are complementary pursuits. Toward this goal, EPA will build bridges between the public and private sectors, create and expand networks to provide processors and manufacturers with needed assistance, and encourage the use of recycled feedstock.
- **Leverage federal resources and build federal partnerships for market development.** EPA will demonstrate how federal agencies can further their primary missions while incorporating environmental protection activities. Federal agencies can lead the way to stronger recycling markets by both procuring recycled products and showcasing resource-efficient approaches and partnerships.
- **Develop infrastructures that support markets for recyclables and recycled products.** By promoting existing mechanisms that support recycling markets, EPA will strengthen the national recycling climate and establish a foundation for the activities of various groups and activities. In particular, EPA will help improve market development programs at the state, tribal, and local levels; provide opportunities for the exchange of information and lessons learned; and promote increased procurement of products with recycled content by public and private sectors.

WASTE
WISE



UPDATE

EPA's WasteWi\$e program is growing fast! On July 20, 1994, EPA hosted a kickoff ceremony to honor the program's 281 charter members. To date, the program has enlisted a total of over 300 companies.

Now that these companies have made the commitment to reduce waste, their next step as WasteWi\$e members is completing the "Goals Identification Form." The form outlines specific efforts they will undertake to prevent waste, recycle, and buy or manufacture recycled products.

So far, more than 10 percent of the WasteWi\$e members have sent their forms to EPA. Here is a sampling of some of their innovative waste reduction efforts:

- A major communications firm will print customer phone bills on two sides, reducing paper and saving up to \$9 million per year.
- A petroleum company plans to shred nonrecyclable paper for use as packing in outgoing shipments, eliminating the need to buy other packing materials.

Through these and a variety of other efforts, WasteWi\$e members are gearing up for effective, creative waste reduction campaigns.

In their campaigns, companies have distinguished between recycling and waste prevention: waste prevention actions *eliminate waste before it is created*; while recycling actions *divert waste to productive use*. The two examples above prevent waste.

For more information on EPA's WasteWi\$e program, call 800 EPA-WISE. ♻️



At the kickoff event, members received certificates recognizing their commitment.

IF YOU ARE INVOLVED

in the field of municipal solid waste (MSW) management, you probably have heard of flow control. **Flow controls** are legal provisions used by local governments to designate where MSW can be processed, stored, or disposed of. Thirty-four states explicitly authorize flow control by statute; an additional nine states authorize flow control indirectly through home rule, the local MSW planning process, or franchises.

Flow control is a hotly debated issue among state and local governments, the waste management industry, recyclers, and environmental groups. The basic debate is whether local governments should be allowed to exercise flow control or whether the free market should dictate MSW management.

EPA is preparing a Report to Congress on flow control. The Report, which will be submitted in September 1994, will compare waste management with and without flow control and analyze some of the major questions in the debate, including the impact of flow control on:

- Protection of human health and the environment.

- Development of state and local waste management capacity.
- Achievement of state and local goals for source reduction, reuse, and recycling.

A recent development in this debate is a May 16 decision by the U.S. Supreme Court regarding an ordinance in Clarkstown, New York, that directed local solid waste to a particular transfer station. The Court ruled that the ordinance violated the commerce clause of the U.S. Constitution. This ruling is likely to speed debate on legislation authorizing flow control by Congress. Although interested parties disagree on the need for flow control in the future, all agree that legislation is needed to protect the contracts and financial agreements that were in effect prior to the Supreme Court ruling.

Below are three perspectives from county officials who are wrestling with this issue in their jurisdictions. These officials commented on flow control at public meetings that EPA held last year.

For more information on flow control, contact Angie Leith of EPA at 202 260-4453.

services to the public, and often at more attractive rates. Waste began to flow across jurisdictional boundaries to more distant disposal sites. More significantly, recycling claimed an ever-growing fraction of the waste stream for the secondary materials markets. Seemingly overnight, the entire waste stream became a *commodity stream*. A major paradigm shift had occurred. And the custodians of the old system cried foul.

Ventura County shares with other local governments the growing pains of this change. However, it is clear that market dynamics and the integrated waste management challenges of the 21st century compel public agencies to rethink their role, and to apply a new set of tools. Flow control has become obsolete because:

- Flow control is irrelevant to public health and environmental protection. These objectives can now be accomplished through comprehensive government regulation and enforcement programs, such as the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) and the local environmental review and land use process, rather than through the monopolization of services.
- Flow control is not required for public policy implementation. Policy objectives can be realized by *regulating* rather than *limiting* market activity. Local governments must learn to fully utilize their existing police powers to set system rules, contract for services, establish pricing incentives, and recover program costs. For example, jurisdictions in Ventura County have solicited private

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VIEW 1 Service Monopolies Are Not the Answer

by Kay Martin, Director, Solid Waste Management Department, Ventura County, California

Flow control is a tool for financing government-sanctioned waste facilities through the establishment of service monopolies. It was born of a time when government

was the major provider of sanitation services, and when protection of the public health relied largely upon moving garbage from the public thoroughfare to remote burning and burial sites. Multi-million-dollar facilities were built, liabilities incurred, and public bureaucracies vested. And, for a time, the system worked reasonably well.

But eventually a broad spectrum of private operators emerged, ready and willing to provide these same



Flow Control

VIEW 2 Congress Should Clarify That Local Governments Have “Flow Control” Authority

by *Randy Johnson, Commissioner,
Hennepin County, Minnesota*

In 1993, Hennepin County, Minnesota, recycled and composted 50 percent of our solid waste and landfilled less than 2 percent. The remainder was sent to modern waste-to-energy plants that meet strict air emissions standards. We have permanent household hazardous waste collection facilities and weekly curbside collection of recyclables.

Hennepin County developed one of the nation’s most successful and comprehensive integrated waste management systems because a flow control ordinance directed virtually all solid waste generated within our county to processing facilities. While some haulers and landfill operators constitutionally attack this long-recognized police power of local governments to protect public health and safety, there are clear public policy reasons for Congress to act promptly to clarify that local governments can use flow control authority.

■ Flow control allows waste to be moved “up” the solid waste management hierarchy. The hierarchy encouraged by EPA and most states is to prevent waste, recycle or compost, and then incinerate or landfill what cannot be reduced. Some flow control

opponents contend that all “licensed” facilities on the hierarchy are equal, and it is irrelevant which one gets the waste. Hennepin County believes that the better public policy is to dispose of waste in the most environmentally sound manner we can afford—not just the cheapest way that is still legal.

- Flow control enables local governments to fund programs to promote waste reduction, reuse, recycling, and the proper management of household hazardous waste. When local governments have flow control authority, they can add to the disposal tip fee appropriate surcharges to fund sound waste management programs such as curbside recycling. Where haulers use volume-based pricing for their customers, the result is that large volume generators pay the most for these programs. This funding system is much fairer than the only other one available to most local governments—a regressive property tax that bears little relation to the volume of waste generated and allows many large-volume generators to escape payment altogether because their property is not taxable.
- Flow control enables comprehensive long-range environmental planning. Once a decision is made to protect public health and safety by building a modern waste facility, potential lenders, investors, and bondholders must be assured that a sufficient volume of waste will be sent to the facility so that

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VIEW 3 Flow Control Is Appropriate Under Certain Conditions

by *Steve Goldstein, Project
Specialist/Comprehensive Planning,
Solid Waste Management Division,
Snohomish County, Washington*

Snohomish County believes that a compromise can be found between maintaining total flow control and eliminating it entirely. Such a compromise must meet three goals. First, it must permit local governments to fulfill existing financial obligations. Second, it must enable local governments to set and implement public policy. Third, it must allow private enterprises to compete fairly for the business of transporting, processing, and disposing of solid waste. We maintain that these goals do not conflict. A compromise proposal—one that allows local governments to exercise flow control in only two circumstances—can accomplish all three goals.

- Circumstance 1—Remaining Debt. Like many other counties, Snohomish County has existing financial obligations and would lose substantial funds if flow control was suddenly taken away. Therefore, we propose that local governments be able to maintain existing flow control arrangements to pay remaining debt on facilities and/or to satisfy current contracts. This would allow local governments to meet financial commitments, while

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Three Views on Flow Control

VIEW 1 (Continued from page 8)

sector proposals for required facilities, specified program requirements and performance standards, negotiated and regulated service rates, provided unit-pricing systems at the curb to influence customer behavior, and assessed fees on all hauling operations at the point of collection to recover integrated waste management program costs.

- **Flow control creates facility-driven systems.** Long-term waste stream commitments to individual facilities ignore the marketplace and foreclose future options which may be economically or environmentally superior. Large facilities with major investments in limited technologies can become albatrosses, inhibiting the diversification of operators, products, and markets now central to system viability.
- **Flow control creates greater system costs.** Ventura County recently abandoned plans for a large centralized processing facility in favor of smaller, diversified operations

by private haulers and recyclers, at substantial savings to the public. Our public landfills maintained their market share by streamlining operations and lowering tipping fees. In both cases, flow control strategies were replaced by market incentives and competition, and the ratepayers benefited.

- **Flow control does not promote recycling.** The financing of large processing facilities through waste stream guarantees is not recycling. Recycling means the return of materials to the economic mainstream. By denying access to these materials by the full spectrum of potential processors, flow control actually inhibits rather than promotes the development of new markets and technologies.

The national agenda for waste reduction and recycling demands innovative market solutions. Creation of service monopolies through flow control is not the answer. Instead, government must redefine itself as a *regulator* and *intervenor* in the new waste commodities marketplace, and become a *skillful buyer* of competitively priced services. 🗑️

VIEW 2 (Continued from page 9)

tipping fees can pay long-term financial obligations. Flow control provides that assurance.

- **Flow control creates a level playing field among haulers.** Without flow control, large hauling companies that own big landfills have a built-in competitive advantage over smaller companies with only a few trucks and newly formed companies that may want to enter the hauling business. With flow control, all haulers pay the same disposal tipping fee, and thus all haulers can compete more fairly.

Of course, if flow control is used to direct waste to less environmentally sound facilities, it is being abused. Enforcement must also be in place so that haulers who use cheaper facilities that do not meet environmental standards are required to pay penalties promptly. Now is the time for Congress to clarify that local governments managing their own solid waste with flow control are fulfilling their responsibilities to protect public health and safety. 🗑️

VIEW 3 (Continued from page 9)

also allowing competition by permitting a private entity to buy out a contract or pay off a facility debt. All applicable governmental bidding procedures would have to be followed.

- **Circumstance 2—Competitive Bidding Process.** Local governments also should be permitted to use flow control when choosing an MSW management facility through a competitive bidding process. This would permit private enterprises to compete for business, while simultaneously allowing local governments to set policy through the bid requirements. Government would be able to set environmental and management criteria, require minimum recycling rates, and charge nondisposal solid waste system costs to the suc-

cessful bidder. The government would be able to take all steps necessary to guarantee that the successful bidder fulfills the responsibilities outlined in the bid. Any private party, as well as the government itself, would be permitted to bid. Again, all applicable governmental bidding procedures would have to be followed.

Snohomish County used this bidding process several years ago. The process of going through the bidding system made us determine very carefully what we needed in a waste management system, and we specified our needs to the bidders. The contract was awarded to the company that could meet all our goals in the most cost-efficient manner. The resulting landfill services continue to meet Snohomish County's needs.

As to what materials should be covered by flow control, we believe first that separated recyclables should not be covered. After separation, we see recyclables as commodities, not waste. Concerning other waste streams, what is subject to flow control should be governed by local government. Local governments design their solid waste management systems around the responsibilities they are assigned under state law. If a local government is assigned the responsibility for managing commercial and industrial waste, it will have no choice but to develop its programs and size its facilities accordingly. While a local government without responsibility for these wastes has no need to control their flow, a government given this responsibility must have the ability to control the flow of these wastes. 🗑️

Recycling Hotline Provides Solid Answers

Wondering who in your community accepts used oil for recycling? Confused about how to sort your recyclable paper for pickup? The average person with questions about recycling is often unsure where to turn for answers. But for the residents of Arizona, Colorado, Hawaii, Nevada, and Texas, answers are just a telephone call away.

By dialing 800 94-REUSE, callers from these five states can access the Environmental/Recycling Hotline. The Hotline uses a caller's zip code to pinpoint the closest recycling center. Callers can then learn the center's location, hours of operation, phone number, and types of materials accepted. Even if no recycling center is located within a caller's zip code, the Hotline automatically

selects the next closest site. In addition, the Hotline provides recycling tips, information about community environmental activities, educational updates, bilingual services, and a bulletin board where callers can leave inquiries for future responses.

The Hotline operates through an innovative public-private partnership. Corporate sponsors fund the Hotline and receive credit for their contributions through "on-the-air announcements." State agencies control and maintain messages, and have the right to reject any sponsors that are not appropriate for the Hotline. This arrangement benefits both partners; corporations have a way to favorably identify themselves with recycling efforts, and state agencies can provide a valuable service

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EPA Implementing Supreme Court Decision on WTE Ash

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled on May 2 that ash from municipal waste-to-energy (WTE) combustors that exhibits a hazardous waste characteristic is not exempt from regulation as a hazardous waste under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA). This ruling affects WTE combustors that burn household waste alone or in combination with nonhazardous waste from industrial and commercial sources.

WTE facilities are now required to determine whether their ash is hazardous. Facilities generating ash that is a hazardous waste should manage the ash in accordance with RCRA hazardous waste regulations. If the ash is not a hazardous waste, it may be disposed of in a municipal solid waste landfill that meets applicable RCRA standards.

EPA recognizes that immediate compliance with all RCRA hazardous waste requirements may be difficult because of the short lead time afforded by the Court's decision. The Agency is working with states and affected facilities to bring all handlers of hazardous WTE ash into compliance with RCRA hazardous waste regulations as quickly as possible.

To this end, EPA issued a draft guidance document entitled *Sampling and Analysis of Municipal Refuse Incineration Ash*, which provides guidelines for testing

WTE ash. In addition, EPA issued an implementation strategy identifying certain ash handling practices that might warrant particular Agency attention. For example, EPA plans to concentrate enforcement efforts on those facilities that fail to implement an ash testing program before September 1, 1994. Technical assistance will continue over the coming months to facilitate compliance.

EPA also published a *Federal Register* notice on June 7, 1994, giving handlers of hazardous ash six months (until December 7, 1994) to file hazardous waste permit applications. The notice also announced that EPA has designated hazardous ash as a "newly identified waste" for the purposes of the Land Disposal Restrictions (LDRs). This means that current LDRs (for generic characteristic wastes) do not apply to hazardous ash. EPA will have six months to promulgate LDRs specific to ash determined to be a hazardous waste.

If you have any questions about WTE ash management or compliance with RCRA hazardous waste regulations, call the RCRA Hotline at 800 424-9346. The Hotline also has available copies of the documents described above: *Sampling and Analysis of Municipal Refuse Incineration Ash* (EPA530-R-94-020), *Federal Register* notice for June 7, 1994 (EPA530-Z-94-008), and *Implementation Strategy* memo (EPA530-F-94-021). ☏

Recycling Hotline Provides Solid Answers

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for free. In fact, by working with the Hotline, many state agencies can avoid setting up and funding their own hotline—a task that several state legislatures have recently mandated. For example, the Hotline has eliminated Arizona's need for four separate hotlines dealing with used oil, batteries, tires, and household hazardous waste. One cost-benefit analysis estimates that the Hotline currently provides and saves over \$3 million worth of promotional services per year.

The Hotline began in Arizona in 1990, expanding after only one year into Texas and Colorado. Expansion was funded by a grant from EPA Region 9 (Arizona, California, Hawaii, Nevada, American Samoa, Guam). With the support of EPA and its own growing reputation, the Hotline was welcomed into Hawaii and Nevada as well. The more states the Hotline covered, the more sponsors signed on. After the Hotline's first year, Why Waste America (an Arizona recycler) documented a greater than 100 percent increase in materials brought into its facility for recycling. And

one year later, the Hotline had logged over 800,000 phone calls.

One reason for the Hotline's success is that it receives millions of dollars worth of free publicity from news services, radio stations, and companies. Advertisers are excited about publicizing a single, sure-fire phone number for recycling information. One Arizona chain of grocery stores recently printed 4.6 million grocery bags prominently displaying the Hotline number.

For more information, contact Chris Warner, director of the Hotline, at 602 224-5444, or Marsha Harris of EPA Region 9 at 415 744-1635. 🗑️



Reusable News is the quarterly newsletter of the EPA Office of Solid Waste's Municipal and Industrial Solid Waste Division. *Reusable News* reports on the efforts of EPA and others to safely and effectively manage the nation's garbage and provides useful information about key issues and concerns in municipal solid waste management.

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