



**Department of
Environmental
Conservation**

Status of Recycling Markets

David Vitale, Director, DEC Division of Materials Management

**NYSAC Legislative Conference
January 29, 2019 – Albany NY**

Issues

China's Restrictions – “National Sword”

- 0.5% bale contamination standard for mixed paper and plastics is challenging to meet
- Not enough current capacity in the US or other parts of the world to easily absorb the materials
- Building domestic markets takes time



Consequences

- Processing at single-stream MRFS has slowed to capture the right materials
- Stockpiling of materials that aren't moving to market
- Processing fees have increased straining municipal budgets

Governor Cuomo Directive

- In August 2018, Governor Cuomo directed DEC to identify new actions and initiatives to improve recycling in New York in response to changes in global recycling markets



Initial Stakeholder Meeting

DEC Held an Initial Stakeholder Meeting in Albany on 8/29/18 to:

- gain insights
- work to develop cooperative solutions



8/29 Initial Stakeholder Meeting – Priority Topics Identified:

- Need for consistent education to combat contamination
- Rising processing & transportation costs
- Aging recycling infrastructure
- Limited NY/regional recycling markets
- Glass & mixed paper challenges



Stakeholder Meetings

DEC Held Follow-up Targeted Stakeholder Meetings

- SUNY New Paltz: Recycling Education 10/12
- SUNY ESF Syracuse: Recycling Infrastructure 10/26



10/12 Education Stakeholder Meeting

Outcome:

- Subcommittee formed to begin working on a 12 part campaign focusing on highlighting one “yes” or one “no” recycling bin item per month in 2019
- Campaign launched in January across public and private platforms statewide. Subcommittee continues to meet on refinements



10/26 Recycling Markets & Infrastructure Stakeholder Meeting

Industry perspectives on:

- Mixed Paper – Myles Cohen, Pratt Industries
- Glass – Cynthia Andela, Andela Products
- Plastics – Tonya Randell, More Recycling



10/26 Markets & Infrastructure Needs Identified

- Modernize Infrastructure:
 - Facility Upgrades necessary to accommodate new sorting equipment and technology
- Identify and develop domestic/alternative markets
- Start with MRF glass



Glass Forums

DEC Held a series of Meetings to Focus on Glass

- Rochester 12/19
- Long Island 1/10
- Albany 1/17



Glass Forum Priority Topics Identified

Main points made by attendees:

- Need to develop markets for mixed glass from MRFs
- Collection methods of glass at curbside is problematic
- Expansion of RCL would help
- Education on civil engineering uses currently allowed by DOT and DEC would help

Stakeholder Suggestions: Short Term

- Consistent Recycling Messaging:
 - why it's important
 - capture the right materials
 - keep them clean and dry

Stakeholder Suggestions: Long Term

- EPR for packaging
- Expand the RCL
- Conversion technologies for plastics

Looking Ahead

- Proposal for legislation on plastic bags and RCL expansion
- Updating the state solid waste management plan
- Developing more partnerships to target behavior change to strengthen recycling messaging



Thank You

Connect with DEC:

Facebook: www.facebook.com/NYSDEC

Twitter: twitter.com/NYSDEC

Email: Recycling@dec.ny.gov



Department of
Environmental
Conservation