

Connecticut Coalition for Sustainable Materials Management Meeting

Meeting Minutes

January 11, 2020 CCSMM Coalition Meeting via ZOOM

Present:	See Attachment A
Next meeting:	March/ April, 2021
Prepared by:	Elizabeth Moore and Chelsey Hahn, DEEP

I. Call to Order and Announcements

Meeting started at 10:02 am.

Co-chairs Katie Dykes, DEEP Commissioner, Laura Francis, First Selectman, Town of Durham and Matt Knickerbocker, First Selectman, Town of Bethel provided welcoming remarks, introductions, housekeeping rules and an overview of the CCSMM initiative process and the meeting agenda.

The co-chairs presented the commitments made at the launch of the initiative and the progress made on each of the five commitments, including:

1. Share experiences and lessons learned from various efforts to adopt effective waste reduction strategies;
2. Engage market participants and local stakeholders to solicit input and proposed waste reduction solutions;
3. Seek creative means to fund solutions that further our collective goal;
4. Identify and evaluate a menu of options that municipalities and the state can adopt that will help us to collectively make progress towards our goal;
5. By January 1, 2021, report on our progress and announce commitments to action in furtherance of our waste reduction vision.

The co-chairs also discussed opportunities to stay engaged and the goals of CCSMM moving forward, including: quarterly meetings, email updates and opportunities for new members to join the coalition.

II. Committee Reports

Matt Knickerbocker, First Selectman, Town of Bethel presented on Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) working group Commitments to Action. The presentation focused on:

- EPR for gas cylinders and tires for 2021 legislative actions; and
- Continued program development for EPR for Packaging for development in 2021, with the aim of supporting packaging EPR legislation in 2022.

Commissioner Dykes presented on Food Scraps/Organics Collection and Diversion working group Commitments to Action. The presentation focused on:

- Affordable organics diversion opportunities;

- Potential interest in hosting organics infrastructure and infrastructure initiative this year;
- 2021 legislative action to strengthen the diversion requirements for large commercial generators of organic materials; and
- Residential food scrap program development options.

Commissioner Dykes presented on Unit-Based Pricing (UBP) working group Commitments to Action. The presentation focused on:

- The roadmap for UBP adoption options;
- Support for statewide legislative mandate;
- Securing needed support for Unit Based Pricing in 2021; and
- Committee on education and outreach moving forward.

Laura Francis, First Selectman, Town of Durham presented on Increase Recycling working group Commitments to Action. The presentation focused on:

- Roadmap for increasing recycling, legislation options;
- Potential legislative options/ municipal options with strong support;
- Municipal efforts, barriers to increasing recycling; and
- SustainableCT community match fund.

Commissioner Dykes presented on funding options, including: ending the landfill loophole in the solid waste assessment and opportunities to scale materials management options.

III. Roundtable

Members discussed organics and food scrap diversion options, including co-collection opportunities. The group also discussed working with the Connecticut Recyclers Coalition and additional stakeholders in 2021. Members asked about the logistics of hosting anaerobic digestion facilities, including technical specs, how much acreage is needed, what kind of traffic it gets. Members discussed interest in quick and concrete steps toward regional collaboration on organics infrastructure in order to try to come up with solutions, collaborate to lower costs, have regional meetings and encourage potential changes to the Commercial Organics Law. Members also noted adding food scraps to leaf and brush composting requires additional equipment and considered if sharing among towns/ COG's might reduce this burden.

Members discussed what regional entities are best for potentially working through organics system implementation, including Councils of Governments (COGs), MIRA municipalities, regional authorities, active resource recovery groups, SustainableCT. COGs were suggested as the best regional groups to work through and with, but it was noted that they would need funding for publicity and education.

Members discussed unit based pricing options and how important unit based pricing is at local, regional, and state levels. Members discussed organizing so that interested municipalities can explore implementation together and benefits to working as a group in order to provide those resources. Members noted that it's hard to talk about unit based pricing without talking about the end-market for recyclables. Kristen Brown, Waste Zero commented that unit based pricing doesn't make materials go straight to commodity recycling. It decreases overall waste generation as well. Kristen Brown also noted:

recycling is a dynamic, changing market; communities with subscription haulers can continue to have UBP; and there are ways to design unit based pricing programs that work for all municipalities. Discussion also included the need for data and a guide for residents and local legislators to start supporting unit based pricing programs and how unit based pricing changes behavior in towns that already have high recycling rates.

Members discussed Increase Recycling options, including enforcement options and recycling coordinators. Members recommended the City of South Portland Maine, which has a targeted program that partnered with college students to encourage recycling compliance. Members cited that the major issue for recycling coordinators as enforcers is hours available in the position as curbside bin “ops” tagging needs to happen while collection is happening. Members discussed enforcement options, including local ordinances/ state legislation and fines. Alyssa Norwood, SustainableCT commented on the work of SustainableCT in being interested in taking the menu of options and finding ways to incorporate the menu in the SustainableCT points system. Members noted support for additional legislation/ modernization of the bottle bill in the chat comments. Upstream’s Government Reuse Forum and their “Skip the Stuff” campaign was also mentioned. There was also a reminder that there is ongoing contamination issues with plastic bags in recycling. Members discussed “in-person” education/ enforcement as a successful model and suggested DEEP should undertake the effort to train potential recycling coordinators.

Members discussed the solid waste assessment opportunities for funding as well as the need to realign those changes to support sustainable materials management options and not shipping materials out of state. Members discussed registering and permitting haulers as a funding mechanism in which they pay a fee when they register, which municipalities can use as a funding option.

The group also discussed next steps for CCSMM, including making and continuing important and effective partnerships with groups like the CT Product Stewardship Council, COGs, Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM), SustainableCT, Connecticut Council of Small Towns (COST), and Regional Waste Authorities. The co-chairs noted that final documents will be available online by January 31, 2021. They also reiterated the request for municipalities to fill out the survey in order to provide follow-up information on who is interested in what actions. They plan to schedule meetings on a quarterly basis, with the next full CCSMM meeting occurring in March/ April 2021. The co-chairs emphasized that the coming year would provide the opportunity for updates on legislative, other actions and continued focus on equity and environmental justice.

Members discussed the need to clearly support options with legislators in order to make legislation for many of these solutions a reality. Members who support EPR were asked to join the Connecticut Product Stewardship Council work whose goals are to shift the burden of disposal and end-of-life product management of household hazardous waste and other hard to manage items from municipalities to the producers.

Co-chairs provided thanks and shared their dedication to continued support and engagement with municipal staff. The chairs also reiterated a request to fill out the survey for municipalities that haven’t completed it yet.

IV. Public Comment

Members of the public were asked to use the “chat” feature or the “raise hand” feature to indicate if they wanted to make a comment.

Diane Lauricella, Norwalk Zero Waste Coalition stated support for regional approaches. Regional enforcement positions can also support education. Diane Lauricella also noted the sense of urgency on waste needs to be brought to legislators who may be unaware of what is going on at the local level.

Mike Harder, Hebron stated the frustration below the surface about achieving the goals discussed over the years, noting that there needs to be additional enforcement and mandates, especially to accomplish unit based pricing. Mike Harder noted that these goals also support meeting climate change goals.

Comments received in the chat box included such topics as regionalization, working with COG’s, education for residents, taxes to pay for trash and recycling services, and the need for the haulers to be involved in the planning and implementation process going forward. Additionally, a question about subscription towns, private haulers and UBP was asked.

V. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 12:03

Attachment A

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