

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Northeast Waste Management Officials' Association (NEWMOA) & the Northeast Recycling Council (NERC) to Advance Sustainable Materials Management (SMM) in the Northeast
September 12, 2014

Purpose of the MOU

The purpose of this MOU is to:

- Articulate mutual interests and operations;
- Promote ongoing communications; and
- Identify opportunities for collaboration and support for each other's initiatives.

This MOU focuses on the organizations' solid waste and sustainable materials management (SMM) activities and does not cover industrial hazardous waste and waste site cleanup.

Memorandum of Understanding

Given the synergies between NERC and NEWMOA's interests, memberships, and activities, the organizations resolve to leverage each other's expertise and experience to benefit the health, and environmental quality of the region by ensuring that the organizations do not undertake similar projects without first establishing a clear distinction between such efforts. To accomplish this, the Executive Directors will meet in person or through conference calls three or more times per year to discuss common areas of interest and opportunities for collaboration, including, but not limited to, SMM, organics management, disaster debris, and the Zero Waste Professional Network. Such collaboration may be accomplished by:

- Promoting each other's events and activities and co-sponsoring such events, where appropriate;
- Reviewing new initiatives and potential funding proposals; and
- Sharing reports and other information resources, including providing links to each other's websites.

Background

The Northeast Waste Management Officials' Association, Inc. (NEWMOA) is a non-profit, non-partisan interstate association whose membership is composed of the state environmental agency directors of the hazardous waste, solid waste, waste site cleanup, emergency response, pollution prevention, and underground storage tank programs in Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

NEWMOA's mission is to develop, lead, and sustain an effective partnership of states that helps achieve a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment by exploring, developing, promoting, and implementing environmentally sound solutions for:

- Reducing materials use and preventing pollution and waste;
- Properly reusing and recycling discarded materials that have value;
- Safely managing solid and hazardous wastes; and
- Remediating contaminated sites.

The group achieves its goals by:

- Managing and sharing information and data;
- Facilitating state and federal agency interaction;
- Providing training and assistance;

- Supporting regulatory development and program implementation; and
- Conducting research.

The Northeast Recycling Council, Inc. (NERC) is a multi-state non-profit organization that is committed to environmental and economic sustainability through responsible solid waste management. Its programs emphasize source reduction, reuse, recycling, composting, environmentally preferable purchasing (EPP), and decreasing the toxicity of the solid waste stream in Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont. It has both state members, who are voting members, non-voting Ex Officio Board members, and non-voting Advisory members that represent multiple interests and perspectives in the recycling industry.

NERC's mission is to advance an environmentally sustainable economy by promoting source and toxicity reduction, recycling, and the purchasing of environmentally preferable products and services.

NERC seeks to fulfill its mission by:

- Leveraging the strengths and resources of its member states and Advisory members through collaboration and information exchange;
- Representing a voice for the common interests of the 10 northeast member states relative to toxicity and source reduction, recycling, composting, environmentally preferable purchasing, climate change, and environmental sustainability;
- Developing and maintaining relationships, dialogues, and strategic alliances with stakeholders to advance an environmentally sustainable economy;
- Providing a forum for communication, strategic planning, and the exchange of information on the issues of environmental sustainability, climate change, energy conservation, product stewardship, and materials management; and
- Providing a non-partisan voice on sustainable materials management.

As an organization, NERC conducts projects that influence policy and affect change through research, technical assistance, demonstration projects, and education.

The organizations have similar missions and functions, and they have overlapping state agency participation. However, the scope of their activities, some functions, and their membership differ. Both organizations provide research, training, and information sharing support activities, including newsletters, conferences and workshops, webinars, websites, and listservs. Both organizations seek funding from the U.S. EPA, USDA, state agencies, foundations, and through fee-for-services initiatives.

NEWMOA and NERC subscribe to the principles of the waste management hierarchy, which places source reduction, reuse, recycling, and composting as preferred waste management strategies above waste to energy and landfilling. Both organizations have endorsed similar principles and definitions for product stewardship and extended producer responsibility (EPR).

Furthermore, NERC and NEWMOA have formally articulated the view that significant mitigation of climate change can be fostered through accelerated waste reduction, reuse, recycling, composting, and other advances in waste management. Through this MOU, they agree to work together on these important issues.

As an association of state environmental agency leaders, NEWMOA's members are the directors of the states' waste and pollution prevention programs. They constitute the group's Board of Directors. NEWMOA's Workgroups and Committees include state agency waste program managers and staffs that oversee enforcement, permitting, development of regulations, technical assistance and outreach, and related efforts. NERC's membership includes state environmental and economic development agencies, as well as resource authorities, reuse and recycling program staff as well as recyclers, trade associations, corporations, local and regional governments and authorities, state recycling organizations, non-profits, and others. NEWMOA provides support for state environmental agency solid waste regulatory and technical assistance program leadership and staff in implementing state RCRA Subtitle D authority. The Association also provides a forum for communicating with the EPA Regional Offices and Headquarters on regulatory and policy issues. In recent years, NEWMOA has focused on a wide range of projects related to the collection and management of data and information for use in priority setting and program planning.

NERC's initial focus on supporting development of markets for recycled materials has evolved over the past 15 years and now encompasses a broader mission with an emphasis on environmental and economic sustainability through waste reduction, reuse, composting, decreased use of toxics, and environmentally preferable purchasing.

In recent years, both organizations have developed programs that reach beyond the Northeast region. NERC supports an Electronics Recycling Coordinating Clearinghouse (ERCC), the State Electronics Challenge, and the Toxics in Packaging Clearinghouse (TPCH). NEWMOA supports an Interstate Mercury Education and Reduction Clearinghouse (IMERC) and an Interstate Chemicals Clearinghouse (IC2).

NERC's efforts focus on supporting voluntary and regional initiatives, and it does not actively advocate or lobby for mandatory approaches. NEWMOA's efforts focus on supporting both mandatory and voluntary approaches. NEWMOA also does not lobby for legislation.

Both organizations have identified food waste management as priorities. The role of NEWMOA's Food Waste Workgroup has been to support development of state environmental agency programs and regulations related to anaerobic digestion and large scale composting. The members of the Workgroup are state regulatory program staff involved with developing best management practices, guidance, permitting, and regulatory requirements.

NERC's food waste, organics, and compost projects have focused on guidance, training, technical assistance, and implementation as well as support for compost market development for schools, governments, farmers, and commercial compost operations.

NERC's other SMM priorities include:

- Design for recycling
- Disaster preparedness and business resilience
- Recycling market and green job development
- Material diversion and recycling
- Source reduction and reuse
- Environmentally preferable purchasing
- Electronic scrap management

- Toxics use reduction

NEWMOA's other SMM priorities include:

- Source reduction and reuse
- Toxics use reduction
- Pharmaceutical waste management
- Collection and analysis of municipal solid waste disposal data
- Collection and analysis of construction and demolition (C & D) debris management data
- Zero waste professional network
- Disaster debris planning and management
- Promoting waste reduction, reuse, composting, and recycling at grocery stores
- Promoting SMM initiatives at lodging and other hospitality facilities
- Pay-as-You Throw program development and support, particularly in rural areas
- Extended producer responsibility program implementation support
- Green chemistry
- Mercury use in products
- Understanding and reducing the use of high priority toxic chemicals in products
- Mildly contaminated soils management
- Beneficial use of industrial non-hazardous materials
- Addressing proper handling and management of difficult to manage waste and materials