



Annual Report

NERC-NEWMOA Joint Strategic Accomplishments

July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018

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Introduction

In June 2017, the NERC and NEWMOA Boards of Directors entered into a [Joint Strategic Action Plan](#) to further and enhance matters of mutual concern. This first-of-its kind effort received national attention and commendation including an in-depth article in *Resource Recycling* magazine. We are pleased to share the remarkable progress that has been made in the first year of the initiative.

Priorities for Action

The Joint Strategic Action Plan identified five key areas of shared interest:

- Food scrap reduction, recovery, and management
- Recyclables collection strategies and impacts on manufacturing/end-users
- Product stewardship
- Climate change and impacts on the recycling and solid waste infrastructure
- Construction and demolition (C&D) materials

The Plan includes short and long-term strategies for each of these important challenges. A summary of first-year accomplishments under each topic area are provided below.

Food Scrap Reduction, Recovery & Management

Task: Form a Joint Food Waste Workgroup

The Joint Strategic Action Plan between NERC & NEWMOA has provided opportunities to network, share information, & gain knowledge from the expertise & experience of communities, businesses, & organizations on key materials management issues. We look forward to continued involvement & collaboration on joint initiatives in the coming year. *Megan Mansfield Pryor, Maine Department of Environmental Protection, Environmental Specialist, Division of Materials Management*

Status: The Joint Workgroup was formed and held three calls in September (12 participants), December (11 participants), and May (12 participants).

The Workgroup organized a webinar in March for NERC and NEWMOA members-only that involved 32 participants on, "[Addressing the Confusing Landscape of Compostable Products](#)". Presenters included:

- Dan Goossen, Green Mountain Compost
- David Mrgich, Maryland Department of the Environment
- Mark Williams, BioBag USA

The PowerPoint presentations and the [recording](#) of the webinar are available on NEWMOA's and NERC's websites.

Task: Promote NERC's organics listserv through NEWMOA and through the Zero Waste Connection.

Status: NEWMOA and NERC promoted the listserv and Workgroup members and others in the northeast actively used it.

Task: Catalogue funding opportunities for generators and developers of food de-packaging technologies/facilities, AD, and composting facilities, including support for conducting waste audits.

Status: NERC compiled and posted the information in a new document entitled [Directory of Government Based Financial Assistance for Organics-Related Businesses](#).

Task: Harmonize organics symbols and images.

Status: This task has resulted in several ongoing efforts:

- The Joint Food Waste Workgroup identified this as a priority, and it was a main topic of discussion during the December Joint Workgroup call.
- NEWMOA and NERC staff drafted a memo proposing that the two group develop an initiative on this topic for the NEWMOA and NERC Boards' consideration. Both Boards approved the proposed strategy in March 2018.
- NEWMOA and NERC held a [webinar](#) in May for their Boards and program staff, involving at least 17 participants from eight states, to share information and discuss next steps. Presenters included:
 - Josh Kelly, Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation

In its first year, the NERC & NEWMOA collaboration has already significantly enhanced the ability of both organizations to educate stakeholders. It has provided a much-needed forum for the Northeast's key players in materials management to share knowledge & ideas on important topics, including reducing contamination & improving organics recycling infrastructure. I look forward to participating in new initiatives in FY 2019, particularly a regional Recycling Markets Development Workgroup that will tackle the most urgent & critical issue in recycling today. *Kaley Laleker, Maryland Department of the Environment, Acting Director, Land & Materials Administration*

- Sherrill Baldwin, Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection
- Krystal Noiseux, Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corporation
- NEWMOA and NERC prepared a written summary of the proposed next steps that were generated during the webinar and distributed it to the Boards for their concurrence via email.
- NERC and NEWMOA have been participating in a national initiative to update the “[10 in the Bin](#)” poster developed several years ago by EPA, Keep America Beautiful (KAB), the Solid Waste Association of North America (SWANA), and the National Waste and Recycling Association (NWRA). These organizations are collaborating to update the document. Depending on the results – hoped for by fall 2018 – it may supplant (or form the basis for) a regionally-focused resource.
- NERC and NEWMOA decided to integrate recycling markets and recycling market development into this effort. NERC has formed a Regional Recycling Market Development Committee that is anticipated to begin its work in September 2018.

Recyclables Collection Strategies & Impacts on Manufacturing/End-users

Task: Support information sharing on emerging technologies to enhance material processing at Materials Recovery Facilities (MRFs) and improve quality of output.

- Develop initial list of who to contact and question to ask.
- Contact consultants/MRFs regarding their thinking.

Status: NERC and NEWMOA developed a list of consultants and MRFs to be interviewed and a list of questions. However, the changed circumstances due to China’s “National Sword” restrictions resulted in a re-think of this strategy. Instead, the two groups interviewed people at several MRFs and others to learn about the market circumstances and changes that they may be implementing or planning (either process or equipment) to meet China’s new requirements.

In addition, NERC collected information during an Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries’ (ISRI’s) MRF subcommittee meeting during its November 2018 event. Further, NEWMOA staff asked state solid waste program managers during a NEWMOA Solid Waste and Sustainable Materials Management Steering Committee call about how they and the facilities in their states are responding to China’s restrictions. A summary of these discussions was prepared.

We are at a critical time in the management of solid waste, with the challenges caused by the China Sword Policy, the growing national interest in managing food waste, & a changing climate that threatens the resiliency of solid waste management infrastructure. Forming this partnership has allowed the region to bring together the experts to help navigate these challenging times.”
Chuck Schwer, Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation, Director, Waste Management Division

Task: Support information sharing and networking with state programs around the country that are making a significant commitment to sustainable materials management, including examining ways to solve the challenges associated with lower quality recyclables.

Status: NERC and NEWMOA organized and held three widely-attended webinars and the recordings are available for each.

[How to Beat Residential Recycling Contamination](#), February 22, 2018, involved more than 400 participants. Presenters were:

- Brooke Nash, Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (Mass DEP)
- Chris Coady, The Recycling Partnership
- Dylan de Thomas, The Recycling Partnership
- Jason Hale, The Recycling Partnership

[Recording](#)

[On the Ground: Lessons Learned from Municipalities to Reduce Contamination of Residential Recycling](#), April 10, 2018, involved more than 250 participants. Presenters were:

- Janice Pare, Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection
- Marissa Perez-Dormitzer, City of New Bedford and Town of Dartmouth, Massachusetts
- Julia Greene, City of Lynn, Massachusetts

[Recording](#)

[Effective Educational Strategies for Proper Recycling](#), June 7, 2018, involved more than 250 participants. Presenters were:

- Cindy Jolicoeur & Anna DeMers, C+C
- Tamara Staranchuk, City of Toronto
- Sherrill Baldwin, Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection

[Recording](#)

Product Stewardship

Task: Form an umbrella organization for state Product Stewardship Councils in the region; start by speaking with state Product Stewardship Councils to obtain their thoughts on the proposal and what they would find most beneficial.

Status: NERC and NEWMOA spoke with leading advocates for product stewardship in the region and prepared a summary for their Boards and Workgroup on the results. These inquiries resulted in positive feedback on the idea of holding regional

This plan is a wonderful example of the success that can result from a collaborative effort to address challenging & often shared solid waste management issues in the region. The joint strategic plan directly supports many of CT DEEP's environmental, economic, & energy initiatives & priorities & this partnership, unity of focus, & collaborative approach is an important way to maximize the effectiveness of our efforts & an efficient way to make progress on the challenges facing member states & in the region. *Robert Isner, Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection, Director, Waste Engineering & Enforcement Division, Bureau of Materials Management & Compliance Assurance*

conversations and providing information sharing opportunities. As a result, we held conference calls of product stewardship leaders in the region on March 28 (18 participants). We planned a call for July 9 (which had 11 participants).

Climate Change & Impacts on the Recycling & Solid Waste Infrastructure

Task: Form a regional working group to discuss Climate and Materials Management strategies.

Status: NEWMOA has formed a working group on this topic that met in December 2017 (3 participants) and February 2018 (6 participants) and in early June 2018 (6 participants). The Workgroup helped prepare a write-up on climate mitigation and materials management strategies for the NEWMOA Board and a separate paper on climate resiliency and materials management. Both write-ups were endorsed by the NEWMOA Board in March. The working group is developing a set of short-term priorities and strategies to pursue starting in the fall of 2018.

Task: Develop methods to track and report GHG benefits of waste reduction, reuse, composting, AD, and recycling.

Status: NEWMOA and NERC contacted Re-Trac and the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to explore opportunities, including data used for the Oregon consumption-based emissions inventory and how they calculate greenhouse gas impacts.

NERC and NEWMOA organized two webinars for their Boards and other members by Oregon DEQ on this topic in [June 2017](#) and in [May 2018](#). The PowerPoint slides and recordings are available on NEWMOA's website.

Task: Information sharing with the West Coast Climate Forum.

Status: NEWMOA and NERC have held two calls with the West Coast Climate Forum to discuss coordination and information sharing opportunities. As a result, announcements about their webinars have been published in the NERC Email Bulletin. All three groups have committed to sharing information resources and tools and to promoting each other's events. They will continue to hold joint calls to stay up-to-date on each other's strategies and activities.

Construction & Demolition (C&D) Materials

Held a national [webinar](#) in January 2018 to share the results of NEWMOA's C&D materials data analysis and NERC's project for Massachusetts on C&D materials recycling opportunities involving more than 185 participants. Presenters were:

- Jennifer Griffith, NEWMOA
- Ted Siegler, DSM Environmental
- Natalie Star, DSM Environmental

[Recording](#)

Summary of Accomplishments

NEWMOA and NERC's achievements under the first year of the Joint Strategic Plan include:

- 8 joint webinars: 4 for the membership of both groups and 4 open to anyone; all of the webinar presentations and recordings are posted on the websites of both groups.
- More than 1,275 participants in at least one of four joint public webinars. There were participants from all over North America.
- Three joint Workgroups actively meeting and planning activities:
 - NEWMOA's Food Waste Workgroup was expanded to include NERC members. It met three times.
 - A Product Stewardship Leaders group was formed and met twice.
 - A Climate and Materials Working Group was formed and met three times.
- NERC formed a new regional Recycling Markets Development Workgroup that will involve NEWMOA's Members.
- Numerous discussions with regional and national sustainable materials management leaders to gather information and input.
- The joint activities have engaged both groups with other groups in the U.S. on messaging around common recyclables and promoting proper recycling.
- Both groups are now actively working with the West Coast Climate Forum and sharing information and resources with them. Two joint calls were held to discuss collaboration and opportunities.
- NERC developed and posted online a catalogue of funding opportunities for generators and developers of food de-packaging technologies/facilities, and AD and composting facilities.
- Both organizations shared written reports with their Boards on the status of activities under the Joint Plan, in addition to this Annual Report.
- The Executive Directors of both groups had 12 calls throughout the year to coordinate and plan activities.

The accomplishments under NERC's and NEWMOA's Joint Strategic Action Plan exceeded everyone's expectations. The amount of education and information sharing that has taken place is reflected in the wealth of material exchanged through the highly attended webinars. This level of collaboration on outreach and information was an aspiration of the Joint Plan, and we are delighted by the results.

This year's collaboration has resulted in the formation or expansion of several working groups that have developed new ideas and strategies and are having lively discussions and working effectively to address their concerns. Many of the ideas that are under discussion for the second year of work under the Strategic Action Plan exceed the vision of the Plan drafters. Plans are underway for new webinars, workshops, meetings, and other joint initiatives in fiscal year 2019.

Having these two great organizations working together has resulted in actions & collaboration beyond our original expectations. Our continued cooperation & joint efforts will only strengthen our resolve within the Northeast to address materials management issues & problems & achieve important & long-lasting solutions. *Peter Pettit, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Director, Bureau of Waste Reduction & Recycling*

The Boards of both organizations have been particularly positive about the accomplishments by both groups under the Joint Strategic Action Plan. In addition, the effort has directly benefited both organizations and their missions and encouraged an expansion of the vision of and opportunities for collaboration.

None of the accomplishments under this Joint Strategic Action Plan would have been possible without the dedication and support of NEWMOA's and NERC's Boards and membership. Their engagement is critical to the success of both organizations, and we appreciated their ideas and involvement.