

# **COUNCIL ON RECYCLING**

## **2023 ANNUAL REPORT**

Prepared for:

**Governor Tony Evers**

and the

**Legislature**

of the

**State of Wisconsin**

Prepared by:

**The Council on Recycling**

Bureau of Waste and Materials Management  
Environmental Management Division  
Department of Natural Resources

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# COUNCIL ON RECYCLING

## **Elected Officers/Executive Committee for 2023:**

**Chair:** Mark Walter, Business Development Manager, Brown County

**Vice-Chair:** David Pellitteri, President, Pellitteri Waste Systems

**Secretary:** Heidi Woelfel, Project Manager, GZA GeoEnvironmental

## **Members:**

John Anderson, retired, Office of Senator Mark Miller

Jarrold Holter, City Engineer/Director of Public Works, City of Onalaska

David Keeling, Regional Sales Manager, Appliance Recycling Centers of America

Marty Oxman, Account Executive, BlackBridge Investments

# **COUNCIL ON RECYCLING**

## **2023 ANNUAL REPORT**

### **Executive Summary**

#### **Membership**

Seven members representing business, industry and local government

#### **Purpose**

Advises Governor, legislature, DNR and other agencies on recycling policy

#### **Background**

The Council on Recycling, authorized in s. 287.22 Wis. Stats., is a citizens' group appointed by the Governor to advise the Governor, Legislature, state agencies and local units of government on solid waste reduction, recovery, and recycling policy. The Council is attached to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for limited purposes and is staffed by the DNR. Each member appointed to the Council serves a 4-year term expiring on the date of commencement of the next gubernatorial term. Terms of members appointed in the interim also expire on that date. Current membership includes individuals representing industry, business, and local units of government.

Councils that serve in an advisory capacity are required under s. 15.09(3), Wis. Stats., to meet at least annually, although the Council on Recycling has met a minimum of 3 times a year since its first meeting on December 5, 1990.

Meetings are open to the public and the public is invited to participate. Council members take an official oath prior to assuming office and are bound by the code of ethics for public officials as provided under Chapter 19, Wis. Stats. The Council conducts business in accordance with its by-laws, Robert's Rules of Order, and the open meeting laws of the state of Wisconsin.

The Council has discussed numerous recycling issues since its inception. Many issues have been discussed for informational purposes and have not required or generated specific action by the Council. On issues where the Council has chosen to take action through the adoption of a recommendation, the approach has been to communicate that position to the Governor's office, the Legislature, state agencies and/or other interested parties.

Recycling is something that has broad support from citizens, business and nonprofits across Wisconsin helping to protect our environment while supplying recycled feedstock to paper mills and other businesses to grow our economy.

#### **Council Responsibilities and Powers**

The Council authorization and responsibilities are specified under s. 287.22, Wis. Stats.

They include the mandate to promote the efficient and prompt implementation of state programs related to solid waste reduction, recovery, and recycling, and to advise the Governor and Legislature on such matters. More specifically, the Council's following duties are enumerated:

- (a) Promote the efficient and prompt implementation of state programs related to solid waste reduction, recovery and recycling.
- (b) Advise and assist state agencies and authorities and county and municipal officials in the coordination of programs and the exchange of information related to solid waste reduction, recovery and recycling. This assistance, whenever practical, shall be provided with an emphasis on documents and material easy to read and understand by the general public.
- (c) Advise state agencies concerning the promulgation of rules under ss. 100.29, 100.295, and 101.126.
- (d) Advise the department and the University of Wisconsin System concerning educational efforts and research related to solid waste reduction, recovery and recycling.
- (g) Develop recommendations and cooperate with the packaging industry concerning establishing and implementing standards for recyclable packaging.
- (gm) Develop recommendations, advise and assist county and municipal officials and the automotive service industry to promote the recycling of oil filters used in motor vehicles and other machinery.
- (h) Advise the department concerning the development of a statewide plan for public service announcements that would provide information about recycling programs and the benefits of recycling through radio and television announcements produced in this state's production facilities and designate a liaison with television and radio stations to try to secure the broadcast of the public service announcements.
- (i) Advise the governor and the legislature.

The statute also provides the Council with powers to execute its duties. The Council may request a status report from any state agency or authority implementing a solid waste reduction, recovery, or recycling program; and the Council may create subcommittees to assist in its work. A subcommittee can be formed from individual Council members, state employees, county and municipality representatives, and others.

### **State Agencies' Obligations to the Council on Recycling**

Section 287.22(4), Wis. Stats., requires state agencies to assist the Council in fulfilling its duties to the fullest extent.

The Council utilizes the DNR's GovDelivery system for distribution of meeting information. Council on Recycling notification are sent to over 6,000 subscribers. Agendas, minutes and background materials are posted on a designated site on the

DNR's webpage (<https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/Recycling/Council.html>). This is one of the ways the Council keeps organizations and individuals around the state informed of the Council's activities and to invite input to our meetings.

## **Overview of Council Activities**

The Council meets quarterly though it has met more frequently when there are significant recycling issues requiring more in-depth discussions. The Council met four times in 2023.

Discussion of past activities and the positions taken by the Council are summarized below. This summary is based on information discussed before the Council at its regular meetings and contained in the minutes. All meeting minutes are public records and are available from the Bureau of Waste & Materials Management, Department of Natural Resources or at: <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/Recycling/Council.html>

The Council regularly is provided updates on a number of topics including:

- E-Cycle Program reports
- Paper, Plastic, Glass & Metal Recycling Market reports
- Regional, National and International Recycling Markets Updates
- Recycling Compliance Issues

## **Activities of the Council, 2015-2023**

From 2015 to 2019, the Council traveled to locations throughout the state of Wisconsin to hear from stakeholders about local recycling market conditions. Beginning in 2018, the Council working on a recycling markets summary report. From 2017 to 2019, the Council also toured seven different facilities that were recovering and processing a variety of materials. Beginning in April 2020, meetings were held virtually with in-person meetings resuming in 2022. In September 2023, the Council again toured a recycling facility and is planning to visit facilities once per year throughout the state.

## **Council on Recycling Accomplishments**

Past efforts by the Council include advocating for passage of a product stewardship approach to electronics in the form of the e-Cycle Wisconsin legislation. The program is a huge success and could be the model for additional product stewardship legislation in Wisconsin. The Council had been working on this issue since 1998 and is proud of the results.

The passage of legislation banning used oil filters and absorbents from landfills beginning in 2011 was another success story of perseverance. The Council began work on this issue in 1998 and was gratified to see the law take effect.

The Council recently provided it support for several pieces of introduced legislation consistent with identified priorities including:

- The Council supported recently proposed legislation regarding education and establishing a process for collecting and recycling rechargeable batteries as a proactive solution to battery disposal and recycling in Wisconsin.

- The Council supported recent legislation to update language in Wisconsin’s electronic waste recycling program to recognize changes in technology and allow manufacturers to more accurately meet their target recycling weights.
- The Council supported proposed legislation that would allow the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to utilize its existing appropriation to conduct statutorily required statewide education on solid waste reduction, recovery, and recycling. The importance of a consistent statewide educational program is significant.
- The Council supported proposed legislation that would create a food waste reduction grant program as an important first step for food waste reduction statewide.

## **Council on Recycling Priorities**

At its June 6, 2023, meeting the Council on Recycling (COR) held a facilitated discussion to identify and prioritize issues warranting further discussion and possible action by the Council. The following issues were identified by COR members at the meeting but do not include the full range of possible topics that the COR may address in the future.

### **Priority Issues (June 6, 2023)**

- 1) *Batteries, Battery-Containing Devices- EPR*
  - a) *Eliminate Batteries from Recycling/Solid Waste*
- 2) *Market Development*
  - a) *Transportation Costs*
  - b) *End Of Life for Green Technologies – Solar, Wind, EV*
  - c) *Clothing/Textile Recycling Options*
  - d) *Paper Recycling*
  - e) *Plastics Recycling*
    - i) *Consistency Across the State on Plastic Types Accepted for Recycling*
    - ii) *Addressing the Number of Different Types*
    - iii) *Microplastics*
  - f) *Glass Recycling*
  - g) *Other Problematic Materials*
- 3) *C&D Waste Diversion*
- 4) *Organics & Food Waste Management*
- 5) *Policy Development*
  - a) *Financial Assistance for RUs- Grant/Formula/Inflation*
  - b) *Regionalization- Reduce Number of RUs*
  - c) *Infractions Against WI Recycling Laws*
- 6) *Recycling Capacity- MRFs*

## **Highest Priorities**

1. Batteries
2. Recycling Markets Development

## **Next Steps**

For each issue, the Council will need to identify the Stakeholders and desired Outcomes for the top issues. Stakeholders can include any organization or entity that has the ability to take action, influence or manage an issue. Outcomes are actions that the Council on Recycling would like to take or actions that others can take that the Council will support.

### ***Batteries***

Stakeholders include manufacturers, retailers, non-governmental organizations, municipal officials, legislators, etc.

Role of Call2Recycle, others

Outcomes - Need to get word out to public on proper battery disposal to avoid fires; COR letter to Governor describing actions needed at a state level.

Reinvigorate the Battery Taskforce.

Other ideas from the Council: invite past Battery Taskforce members, consider bill from battery manufacturers, invite a state representative from a different state with battery collection EPR.

The DNR's Waste and Materials Study Group has also been considering battery management issues.

### ***Market Development***

Stakeholders include manufacturers, retailers, etc.

Outcomes include end user identification, awareness for elected officials, plastic to oil information, advocacy, market development in Wisconsin, council member education, education for legislature/governor, target packaging engineers- especially for problematic/hard to recycle materials.

## **Conclusion**

The Council on Recycling serves as an advocate for the recycling industry in Wisconsin by keeping informed about industry trends and issues. As noted, recycling is something that has broad support from citizens, business and nonprofits across Wisconsin

It is clear that the Council will continue to serve as a forum for organizations and individuals to discuss the issues that matter to governmental bodies, companies, non-governmental organizations and individuals with an interest in recycling in Wisconsin. The Council will continue its statutory responsibility to give advice and will seek solutions for the challenges and take advantage of the opportunities facing recycling in Wisconsin today. The Council is looking forward to new challenges, especially in the areas of product stewardship, recycling education and ongoing program funding.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide information regarding the Council on Recycling and its activities.