

Patrick-Murray Administration Maintains Incinerator Moratorium, Expands Recycling Efforts

EEA outlines priorities for comprehensive recycling push; calls for review of construction and demolition material used for fuel

BOSTON - The Patrick-Murray Administration today announced that it would maintain the existing moratorium on new facilities for incineration of municipal solid waste. In addition, Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Ian Bowles outlined Governor Patrick's priorities for expanding the recycling of key products like water bottles and consumer electronics, as part of a push to reduce the amount of waste sent to landfills and incinerators.

"We are serious about managing the waste we generate in a way that saves money for cities and towns, curbs pollution and protects the environment for our children and grandchildren," said Governor Deval Patrick. "There are better ways than traditional incineration."

"Focusing on incineration and landfills is the wrong end of the waste equation," said Secretary Bowles. "While Massachusetts is ahead of the national average in recycling and some communities like Nantucket are leading the way, there is a lot more we can do to increase recycling and reduce disposal of useful materials."

The Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) has had in place a moratorium on new municipal solid waste combustion facilities since 1990. As MassDEP prepares a new Solid Waste Master Plan, which it is expected to issue as a draft in early 2010, today's announcement specifies that the new plan will maintain the moratorium, but also strengthen it in two ways - by reducing dramatically the amount of recyclable material going into the waste stream, and by developing stringent new performance standards for existing waste-to-energy facilities that require higher recycling rates in waste collection areas, lower emissions of greenhouse gases and other pollutants, and higher efficiency in energy recapture. MassDEP will work toward developing these performance standards for the next 10-year Master Plan.

Secretary Bowles noted that anaerobic digestion, advanced biofuels, and other proven types of waste-to-energy technology applied to organic wastes, will continue to be encouraged in the new Master Plan, but that incineration of mixed municipal solid waste will continue to be restricted to existing facilities.

To complement the incinerator moratorium, the Patrick-Murray Administration is committed to an aggressive agenda of recycling and waste reduction that gives cities and towns assistance to expand and improve their recycling efforts and requires greater responsibility from manufacturers for products - ranging from water bottles to televisions - that end up in our waste stream.

- The Patrick-Murray Administration's priorities to expand recycling and waste reduction include:
Consumer Electronics: The Administration calls for passage of comprehensive producer responsibility legislation for discarded electronics, the so-called "E-Waste" bill, relieving municipalities of this burden.
- Expanded Bottle Bill: The Administration urges approval of an expanded bottle bill to cover water and sports drink bottles, which will reduce litter, increase recycling rates for containers from the fastest-growing segment of beverages, and provide additional resources to support local recycling efforts.
- New Protections for Communities: The Administration will seek greater authority for MassDEP to intervene in problem landfills, such as the one on Crow Lane in Newburyport, and new authority to require waste haulers to provide full recycling services to their customers.
- Helping Municipalities Increase Recycling Rates: The Administration will work with the Legislature, municipalities,

and stakeholders to devise new standards and programs to help cities and towns reach higher rates of recycling by offering assistance for municipalities to adopt more effective methods, such as single-stream recycling, which eliminates the need for households to sort their recyclables.

"This initiative will return Massachusetts to national leadership in recycling," said MassDEP Commissioner Laurie Burt. "Built on this foundation, the Solid Waste Master Plan issued next year will guide consumers, businesses, and municipalities toward a future of more recycling, and less landfills and incineration."

At the same time, Secretary Bowles announced that he has directed MassDEP to suspend review of permit applications for facilities proposing to use construction and demolition materials (C&D) as fuel for energy generation, including the proposed Palmer Renewable Energy facility, until a comprehensive assessment of the environmental impacts of using such materials is completed.. This assessment will include a review of potential for emissions of greenhouse gases and other air pollutants related to C&D, an analysis of level of contaminants commonly found in C&D feedstocks, and a review of the most effective means for minimizing, sampling and monitoring of toxics and other contaminants of concern in these feedstocks. Further, the Secretary has directed MassDEP, in coordination with the state Department of Public Health (DPH), to conduct a review of the potential public health impacts associated with the combustion C&D.