

Responsiveness Summary

Proposed Readoption of the State of Vermont Solid Waste Management Plan

July 2006

Agency of Natural Resources

Department of Environmental Conservation

Solid Waste Program

Introduction

Vermont Statute (10 V.S.A. § 6604) directs the Secretary of the Agency of Natural Resources to publish and adopt a plan that sets forth a comprehensive state-wide solid waste management strategy, and to revise it every 5 years. The current Solid Waste Management Plan (State Plan) was adopted on August 31, 2001. The Agency believes the best approach is to readopt the current State Plan (as opposed to developing a new Plan) because the critical issues regarding solid waste management have not changed significantly and the State Plan's goals and action steps continue to be an effective strategy to address the critical issues. By readopting the State Plan, the Agency will spend its limited resources on programs and activities to achieve the goals of the Plan as opposed to a new planning effort.

The Agency sought public comments regarding readopting the State Plan through a public hearing held on May 31, 2006 and a public comment period that closed on June 14, 2006. We received a total of 14 comments. This Responsiveness Summary is our response to the comments.

Summary of Comments

We received a total of 14 individual comments, all of which are from Central Vermont Solid Waste Management District staff and board members. Of the 14 comments, 11 are exactly the same (except for the signature) and the remaining three are exactly the same. The comments (both versions) request we update the State Plan to "embrace" Zero Waste. The difference is the degree to which we should embrace Zero Waste and whether the Agency's current policies are part of "the problem" or "the solution". Copies of both comments are attached

Response

Thank you for your comments. We recognize and applaud the Central Vermont Solid Waste Management District as one of the few municipal organizations in the U.S. who have incorporated the Zero Waste philosophy and policies into its programs. We note the District's solid waste implementation plan is based on the Zero Waste model. We are encouraged by the District's interest in Zero Waste and will look to the District for guidance about how to incorporate Zero Waste policies and/or incentives as we address the various critical issues that make up the State Plan.

While we agree the current (and proposed to be readopted) State Plan does not "embrace" Zero Waste, we do not believe this prevents or inhibit the Agency from incorporating Zero Waste policies or incentives in the future as appropriate. In fact, we believe most if not all Zero Waste policies and incentives are consistent with the State Plan's goals, meaning we could implement them at any time.

The Department of Environmental Conservation is in the early phase of a waste prevention planning effort. Our goal is to develop an effective and measurable strategy, including goals and action steps to incorporate into the State Plan. While we cannot predict the outcome of this effort, it is possible that the goals and action steps identified and ultimately adopted will be

consistent with Zero Waste, if not Zero Waste itself. As a leader in adopting Zero Waste policies and incentives, we hope and trust the District will participate in this effort. We recognize that to ultimately be successful, the Zero Waste philosophy needs to be implemented on a regional, national, or perhaps international level. By partnering together, the District, Agency, and the other stakeholders begin addressing a problem much larger than we can address alone given our limited resources.

Result

After considering the 14 comments, the Agency still proposes to readopt the State Plan.

JUN 16 2006

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*Helping Our
Cities and Towns
Work Toward
Zero Waste*

CENTRAL VERMONT SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

Jeff Fehrs
Agency of Natural Resources
Waste Management Division
103 S. Main St.
Waterbury VT, 05676-0404

June 7, 2006

Dear Mr. Fehrs,

I am writing to request that the Agency of Natural Resources update their Solid Waste plan to adopt Zero Waste and embrace its policies and goals.

Vermont is facing stagnant and sometimes declining diversion rates, despite our having an environmentally predisposed population. Zero Waste programming can jumpstart those rates and be economically and environmentally rewarding.

Many communities throughout the United States, Canada and Australia see the importance a Zero Waste policy in the quest for permanent change in the handling of their discards. They have achieved their goals through community forums, intentional subsidies to spur specific types of business to affect the marketplace, study circles, pilot/ educational programs and leading by example.

Through Zero Waste, discarded materials become resources and consumers can become aware of their habits of purchasing chemical products and items that can only be incinerated or buried in a landfill.

Zero Waste also creates green jobs and businesses as consumers change their habits. It empowers consumers as they learn that their choices matter to the environment and to their health.

Furthermore, as a citizen of the State of Vermont, I feel that if our State policies are not part of the solution, they are part of the problem.

Sincerely,


Executive Director

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Agency of Natural Resources
Waste Management Division
103 S. Main St.
Waterbury VT, 05676-0404

June 7, 2006

Dear Mr. Fehrs,

I am writing to request that the Agency of Natural Resources update their Solid Waste plan to embrace Zero Waste as having value and begin to plan to adopt some policies and incentives to eliminate waste.

Vermont is facing stagnant and sometimes declining diversion rates, despite our having an environmentally predisposed population. Zero Waste programming can jumpstart those rates and be economically and environmentally rewarding.

Many communities throughout the United States, Canada and Australia see the importance of such a policy in the quest for permanent change in the handling of their discards. They have achieved their goals through community forums, intentional subsidies to spur specific types of business to affect the marketplace, study circles, pilot/educational programs and leading by example.

Through Zero Waste, discarded materials become resources and consumers can become aware of their habits of purchasing chemical products and items that can only be incinerated or buried in a landfill.

Zero Waste also creates green jobs and businesses as consumers change their habits. It empowers consumers as they learn that their choices matter to the environment and to their health.

Vermonters are very proud of their environmental policies and I would like to see the ANR move their policies in a direction that reflects those values.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ben Power".