



Preserving Resources,
Preventing Waste

The New Jersey WasteWise Bulletin

Newsletter of the New Jersey WasteWise Business Network – Summer 2023
*WasteWise ... improving your bottom line and the environment
through waste reduction, recycling, and recycled product procurement.*

New Jersey Plastics Advisory Council Report Released

As most New Jersey residents now know, legislation that prohibits the use of single-use plastic and single-use paper carryout bags at stores and food service businesses became effective in May of 2022. Among its other provisions, the law called for the creation of a Plastics Advisory Council, whose mission was to investigate and report on the effectiveness of the single-use bag prohibition and other issues pertaining to plastic waste reduction and recycling. The Plastics Advisory Council recently issued its first-year report which not only highlights the success of the single-use bag prohibition, but also includes numerous recommendations to improve the effectiveness of the law.

The council reported that the law “had the direct effect of eliminating approximately 88 million single-use plastic bags from New Jersey’s environment per month.” The report notes that this figure is an underestimation of the true number of single-use bags eliminated. It also addresses numerous related issues that have arisen over the past year, such as the accumulation of reusable carryout bags by residents resulting from the increase in home and curbside delivery of groceries.

The council will continue its work on plastic waste reduction and recycling and is required by law to submit a follow-up report in 2024. The council’s first-year report is available at <https://dep.nj.gov/wp-content/uploads/pac-first-year-report-2023.pdf>.

DEP Recycling Awards Program Now Open

The DEP is now accepting nominations for its annual recognition program celebrating excellence in recycling. This year’s program features 11 award categories, including a new award category – Recycled Products Procurement Star – which recognizes any business, institution, government agency or other organization that has implemented a post-consumer recycled products procurement program or expanded an existing post-consumer recycled products procurement program. Such products are made with a percentage of recycled content material derived from goods that were used by consumers, collected and then recycled. Nominations are due by July 21, 2023. Learn more at recycle.nj.gov.

ANJR’s Marie Kruzan Announces Retirement

After more than 34 years as Executive Director of the Association of New Jersey Recyclers (ANJR), Marie Kruzan is moving on to the next chapter of her life - retirement! Marie is well-respected throughout the recycling community for her passion for recycling, knowledge, dedication, good nature and outstanding work and her achievements for ANJR. Marie has been a great partner to the recycling staff at the DEP and other organizations, as well. Congratulations, Marie! Enjoy your well-deserved retirement! You will be missed!

Quote of the Day

“To leave the world better than you found it, sometimes you have to pick up other people’s trash.” - Bill Nye the Science Guy

Did You Know...

- The French government is undertaking a major cleanup of the Seine River in the hopes of using the river for various aquatic events during the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris. In addition to employing various strategies to improve the water quality of the Seine, the cleanup effort includes removing many tons of trash and debris from the river.
- The Boys & Girls Clubs of Mercer County Bike Exchange is a volunteer-led enterprise that repairs donated bicycles and sells them at modest prices at its Ewing location. All proceeds from the sales of bikes benefit the Boys & Girls Clubs of Mercer County.
- The California Carpet Stewardship Program achieved a carpet recycling rate of 33% for 2022. This far exceeds the 27% goal set in the program's Five-Year Plan. Learn more about this program at <https://carpetrecovery.org/>.
- Thanks to DEP funding, the Recycle Coach information system is available at no cost to New Jersey municipalities. Recycle Coach helps municipalities inform residents about local recycling requirements. For more details, visit <https://www.nj.gov/dep/dshw/rc/index.html>.
- As it looks towards Mars, NASA is seeking input from the public to help develop new and innovative ideas to convert waste into useful materials or safely eject it away from a spacecraft. For more information, visit <https://www.herox.com/WasteToBase/teams>

Truth in Labeling Basics

Understandably, consumers believe that a product or package is recyclable when they see the chasing arrows or any other indicator of recyclability on the product or package. Many of these items, however, are not accepted in local recycling programs and so become contaminants in the recycling stream once placed in a recycling bin. This confusing scenario has led many states to explore "Truth in Labeling" legislation, which makes it illegal to include the recycling symbol or an indicator of recyclability on a product that is not recyclable. Learn more at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LV1FXyY1dAg>.

Green Teams Lead the Way

Recycling programs and other sustainable initiatives are more likely to succeed when they are supported by a "green team," which is a group of volunteers from various departments of a company or organization that come together to champion internal environmental programs and initiatives. Upon securing support of upper management, a green team will be able to move ahead and recruit volunteers, begin analyzing internal operations and develop company-wide sustainability programs. For information on starting a green team, visit <https://recyclecoach.com/blog/how-to-start-a-corporate-green-team-to-fast-track-your-green-initiatives/>.

Dual Stream Recycling Resource Now Available

In recognition of the renewed interest in dual stream collection of recyclable materials – bottles, cans and containers in one bin and paper in another bin - the DEP released a fact sheet on the benefits of this collection system. This system contrasts with single stream collection systems, which allow users to mix all recyclable materials in one bin.

While not financially or logistically feasible for all, stricter quality control standards, recycling market fluctuations and rising program costs have not only led some in the recycling community to reconsider dual stream collection of recyclable materials but to return to dual stream collection programs, which typically generate materials that are cleaner and more marketable than single stream collection programs. The DEP's dual stream fact sheet is available at <https://www.nj.gov/dep/dshw/recycling/Dual%20Stream%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf>



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<http://www.nj.gov/dep/dshw/recycling/wastewise/brbn03.htm>