

Program Report Card: Recycling in Connecticut, CT DEP

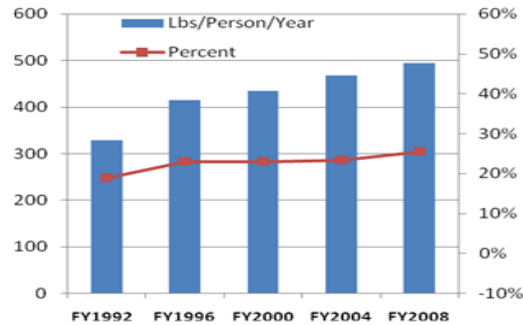
Quality of Life Result: All Connecticut residents live in a “clean and wholesome” environment in which natural resources are conserved and protected.

Contribution to Result: Waste minimization and prevention programs (source reduction, materials reuse, recycling, composting) optimize the percentage of solid wastes diverted from disposal, thereby minimizing the volume of waste burned or disposed. This saves energy, prevents greenhouse gases, conserves natural resources, saves landfill space, reduces pollutants and toxicity, and lowers the potential for degradation of air and water. *Less waste means less waste problems and a better environment.*

Partners: Municipalities, CRRRA, regional resources recovery and solid waste authorities, DECD, OPM, CT General Assembly, regional solid waste and recycling operating committees, academic institutions, environmental advocacy groups, property tax reform advocates.

Performance Measure 1: STATEWIDE RECYCLING RATE

CT Recycling Rate



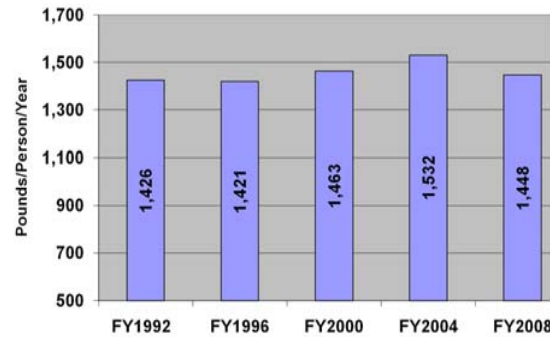
Story behind the baseline:

Mandatory recycling was put into place in 1989 to decrease the amount of waste disposed. CGS 22a-220(f) set a 40% recycling goal for the year 2000. While total tons have risen, the percent of Municipal Solid Waste (“MSW”) recycled has stalled at 25% due to an overall increase in waste generation and disposal. This trend could require public expenditures for additional disposal capacity. Locating, permitting, and building new RRFs and landfills is a costly and time-consuming process. If all municipalities reached 40% recycling, the cost savings would be about \$35 million dollars statewide in avoided disposal fees.

Proposed actions to turn the curve: Ensure partners’ actions conform to state solid waste management plan: Focus on municipal compliance; support legislation to improve recycling of certain wastes; target enforcement in key sectors; improve collectors’ registrations and ensure collectors act on their enforcement role.

Performance Measure 2: PER CAPITA DISPOSAL RATE

Pounds/Person/Year MSW Disposed



Story behind the baseline: Data in chart includes residential and commercial waste. DEP estimates each CT person annually accounts for 900 lbs residential MSW. US EPA estimates that 500 pounds residential MSW per person annually is a sustainable disposal rate. The general lack of an economic signal at the individual level on the costs of disposal results in a failure to properly value recycling. Statewide education is limited due to the variety of collection services and recycling practices resulting from municipal, rather than regional, control of solid waste management.

Proposed actions to turn the curve:

DEP will improve data reporting and post data on website to aid municipalities in measuring their progress toward the goal. Recognize exemplary municipal recycling rates. Encourage collectors and municipalities to use unit-based pricing for solid waste disposal to change how residents value recycling. Encourage partners to act regionally.

Performance Measure 3: CLOSING THE GAPS IN INFRASTRUCTURE PERMITTED CAPACITY

Recycling Infrastructure

| Waste type | Permitted facilities (#) | Capacity meeting current need (%) |
|----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Bottles, cans, paper | 6+ | 100% |
| Food Waste | 1 | 10% |
| Electronics | 6 | varying |
| Soil | 0 | marginal |

Story behind the baseline: Current infrastructure has sufficient capacity to process current tonnages of commodity recyclables [paper, bottles, cans]. Infrastructure is lacking for processing certain significant sectors such as electronics, food waste, other organics, and soil] and for marketing and using processed recyclables. CT food waste is 13% of all waste disposed or 331,468 tons annually. There is one permitted food waste recycler in CT.

Proposed actions to turn the curve: Prioritize permit applications that close the capacity gap in specific sectors. Revise regulations to clarify reuse of soils and construction materials. Focus on permitting of collectors, processors, and waste streams with lagging recycling rates. Encourage partners to invest in making home composting units widely available. Ensure partners assist in development of industries, technologies, and commercial enterprises within the state that are based upon recycling, reuse, treatment, or processing of solid waste. Ensure partners encourage private investment in local recycled materials industries and marketing as part of green jobs promotion.