

DATE: *December 6, 2019*
TO: Mayor and City Council
FROM: Assistant City Manager
SUBJECT: Recycling Program Rate Adjustment



RECOMMENDED ACTION

Approve the recycling program rate increase effective January 1, as requested by our solid waste vendor to address increasing costs in the materials recovery process by the recycling industry.

In early 2018, the Chinese government announced new policies to restrict the amount of waste that came into the country comingled with recovered materials. The policies were collectively promulgated as, “National Sword” and imposed strict standards along with immediate implementation. Once the generators of waste in the west began to adjust to the new standard and filled up remaining capacity, the costs to sort and dispose of contaminants in our single-stream programs mounted and the Materials Recovery Facilities (MRF) had to adjust rates.

The city’s contract with Advanced Disposal has been in place since 2009 and outlined a program to collect and recycle certain materials with the cost built-into the rate for solid waste collection. The list of items collected was also designed into the agreement along with provisions for rate adjustment given conditions of inflation, fuel cost increases, and unforeseen causes of a regulatory nature.

Staff has confirmed the increasing cost of the MRFs to provide the sorting and processing services with vendors like Pratt who is now charging up to \$60/ton for recyclables whereas in the previous waste economy, there was a \$5/ton profit from this part of the waste stream. Cities in the metro area as well as across the southeast (Covington, Gwinnett cities, e.g.) are having to, as nimbly as possible, adjust to the changing market conditions. The conversation is now shifting toward reduction as the key to preserving and protecting the environment and landfill capacity as much as recycling.

Given the amount of information available establishing the changes in the recycling industry as well as the city's collection records for the latest twelve months, the increase is calculated to be about 5% or \$0.68 per customer per month for cart service and a comparable increase for bag service. The increase is sure to precipitate other changes in the industry including limits on what classes of recyclables can be comingled and which should be collected and presorted at drop-off facilities. The request also signals the changes coming to the packaging industry and the need to reduce the overall waste stream.

Alternatives considered during staff review included discontinuing recyclable collection altogether; changing the collection frequency (1 or 2 times per month); acquisition, construction and staffing of a drop-off facility for presorting prior to collection; denying the request under the terms of the agreement; or changing vendors for this part of the collection program. Each of these options considered had varying degrees of merit, but created public health concerns, environmental impacts, as well as greater upfront costs to the city with the drop-off option.

Therefore, approval of the requested rate increase is the recommended action at this time. The other alternatives should be weighed during negotiations during the next renewal for the solid waste collection contract. Given this criteria, analysis and limit, staff recommends authorizing the rate increase.

Attachments

Letter – Advanced Disposal

References

2019.11.19- Rockdale Citizen, " Covington locks in 3YR contract with Pratt Industries"
2019.11.18 – Raleigh News/Observer, " Why Raleigh is about to pay a lot more for recycling"
2019.10.22 - SWANA – ARF Excerpt "Resetting Curbside Recycling In the Wake of China"
2019.10.30 – Plastics Today, "US curbside recycling needs to change"
2019.09.10 -"New SWANA report highlights National Sword Impact and Solutions"



November 4, 2019

City of Sugar Hill
Mr. Troy Besseche
5039 West Broad Street
Sugar Hill, GA 30518

Re: Increased Recycling Processing Charge

Dear Mr. Besseche:

I don't want to surprise you but there is a possible new increased residential single-stream curbside recycling processing charge that we cannot absorb. The primary reasons for this increase are because recycling commodities markets are down drastically on a global basis, law of supply and demand, and contamination factors. We are now having to pay \$35.00 per ton plus increased transportation costs. We are continuing to negotiate with the processor to bring down this unanticipated increased cost on your behalf.

Attached is support documentation showing the calculation for the cost increase based on the number of recycling tons collected in Sugar Hill. The increase is estimated to be \$0.68 on the monthly residential invoice per unit. This increase is projected to be effective January 1, 2020 as per the effective date of the increased processing cost. I will be more than happy to present this cost adjustment to Mayor and Council at a work session. Should you have any questions regarding this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Jim Lovell
General Manager
Jimmy.Lovell@AdvancedDisposal.com
(843) 506-1240

888o Old Federal Road * Ball Ground, GA 30107

https://www.rockdalenewtoncitizen.com/news/covington-locks-in-three-year-contract-with-pratt-industries-for/article_00d6511a-0af4-11ea-9a99-ff1798ae5f41.html

FEATURED

Covington locks in three-year contract with Pratt Industries for disposal of recyclables

Larry Stanford larry.stanford@rockdalecitizen.com 2 hrs ago



COVINGTON — In an effort to remain a green community, the Covington City Council has approved an agreement with Pratt Industries in Conyers to take the city's recyclables for \$60 a ton. The action came at the council's meeting on Nov. 12.

Previously, Pratt and other companies that dealt in recycling would pay to take recyclables. Much of the recyclables material was then sent to China to be made into goods such as shoes, bags and new plastic products. But in 2018, China banned imports of 24 different kinds of recyclable wastes, including paper, cardboard and most plastics.

With there no longer being a market for waste companies to sell their recycling, the burden is falling onto cities and counties to either pay the recycling companies to take their waste, or throw it all away,

City Manager Leigh Anne Knight advised the council that the issue of what to do with the recyclables came up just as the council was deciding to outsource sanitation services.

“Recycling here is no longer a product we can actually be paid for,” she said. “Originally, we were getting money for it, but now that’s not the case. We always hauled it to Pratt anyway, and Pratt is willing to set a rate of \$60 per ton for single-stream (combined recycling) for a three-year period. This is actually market rate, and we believe this works better for us than actually having the contractor make an agreement with them. They were very willing to work with us and do that.

“The contractor is still going to pick up all the recycling,” she added. “When they take it to Pratt, Pratt will provide us with the details of how much the contractor took to them that we will be responsible for.”

Mayor Ronnie Johnston asked how much recyclable tonnage the city took in last year.

Public Works Director Tres Thomas said the city collected a little over 500 tons of recyclables last year.

Council member Josh McKelvey noted that if the city averaged 500 tons a year in the future, it would cost about \$30,000 to dispose of it.

During discussion it was asked if the contract could be for a one-year period instead of three, so the price could be adjusted if it went down.

Knight said that could be done, but noted that chances are prices will continue to increase and locking in Pratt's price for three years is better than going year to year, which could allow Pratt to increase its price.

The council agreed.

Johnston noted that the city could dump its recyclables at the landfill for less, but it would not match the city's efforts to be green and would hamper city efforts to attract industries interested in building in green communities.

"In essence what this means, because the city wants to still continue to be green, we are now going to be paying for the tonnage to be disposed of," said Johnston. "If we did actually take this tonnage to our landfill, it is \$41 a ton.

"So if anybody says Covington doesn't care about being green; we actually do. We're willing to spend a little bit more money to do it. We're still trying to do the right thing."

The council approved the contract with Pratt Industries by a 6-0 vote.



WAKE COUNTY

Why Raleigh is about to pay a lot more for recycling (And it's not all China's fault)

BY TRENT BROWN

NOVEMBER 18, 2019 04:43 PM



Formerly the largest importer of recyclables, China raised their contamination standards to impossible levels on Jan. 1. This means your local municipality may have to pay more to empty your bin, but you can help. BY CASEY TOTH

RALEIGH

It's about to cost Raleigh a lot more, a lot sooner than expected, to keep recycling.

The City Council will consider an agreement Tuesday to pay Sonoco Recycling up to \$1.5 million to continue taking Raleigh's recyclable materials for six months, while the two sides negotiate a longer contract.

And it's not just Raleigh. The cost of recycling has been rising across the United States since China banned most recycled material imports in January 2018. China also increased tariffs on recyclables like aluminum, fallout from the Trump administration's trade wars.

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“Overnight it was a 180 degree flip,” said Robert Williams, Orange County’s solid waste director.

Sonoco, which has served Raleigh since 2006, told the city earlier this year it would stop collecting recyclables in the city in December — two years sooner than expected — because of “unsustainable losses,” according to the agenda for Tuesday’s City Council meeting. A clause allows either party to end the contract upon 30 days notice.

As recently as 2016, Raleigh was still getting paid to send materials to Sonoco.

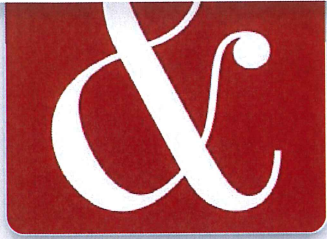
Now to keep recycling going through June 2020, the city has tentatively agreed to pay the company a baseline of \$105 per ton, the highest rate in the Triangle. This number may change based on how much Sonoco earns from selling the processed recycled materials later.

Raleigh will either pull the \$1.5 million from its general fund or by increasing the city’s monthly recycling fee from \$2.60 to \$3.26.

Stan Joseph, director of solid waste services, said he thinks using the general fund will be an easier fix for the short-term contract. Over the six-month period, he expects the city will negotiate a three-year contract. Raleigh is one of many cities Sonoco is having to adjust across the U.S. due to recycling market challenges.

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DIFFERENT FROM WEST COAST

While some towns and cities on the [West Coast have quit recycling](#), local governments in the Triangle say they will continue their programs.

“We’re in a very different situation than a lot of parts of the country,” said Wayne Fenton, assistant director of Durham solid waste services.

Unlike the West Coast, which relied on the ease of using shipping containers coming from China to send back recycled materials, the Southeast has much more infrastructure to handle market changes.

“In California, it’s (been) less expensive to send materials to China than up the road in San Diego,” Fenton said. “One of the big things I remind people is that we live in the Southeast and there are a lot of processors in the area.”

Processors, or Materials Recovery Facilities (MRFs), receive, separate and process recyclables to sell. There are 17 MRFs in the state, two in Raleigh.



Ernesto Prudeste clears the floor under sorting machinery at Sonoco Recycling Center on Feb. 16, 2012. Polyethylene terephthalate (PET) plastics, along with High-density polyethylene (HDPE) plastics, were recently banned from North Carolina landfills starting Oct. 31, 2011 (not positive on the date). Residents of North Carolina are not likely to be fined unless they're unloading a large amount, but recent data has shown a 50% increase in recycled plastic bottles statewide, despite the lack of enforcement. Casey Toth
NEWSOBSERVER.COM

Raleigh, Orange County and Durham all pay Sonoco Recycling to take their materials.

Cary recently left Sonoco for Waste Management's Recycle America, which also contracts with Wake County. There are also facilities like Strategic Materials in Wilson which recycles glass and multiple facilities in the Triangle that recycle electronics. According to the NC Department of Environmental Quality, there are almost 700 recycling businesses in the state.

The NCDEQ also has an annual recycling business development grant program that awarded \$511,000 to 17 companies that process recyclable materials.

Robert Williams from Orange County said facilities like these are continuing to be built because “there’s still value in those quality items like type one and two plastics and aluminum.”

Examples of Type 1 Plastics:

- Water bottles
- Peanut butter jars
- Combs

Examples of Type 2 Plastics:

- Milk jugs
- Shampoo bottles
- Juice containers

LESS GOING TO LANDFILLS

Recycling has reduced waste going to landfills, but changes that have made it easier for people to recycle have also made it harder to find buyers.

In the past, employees would get out of a truck and sort through a home’s recycling before throwing it in the truck. When automated arms were added to the sides of recycling trucks later, speeding pick-up, everything got tossed in at once.

“It used to be that if you put something in the recycling bin and it didn’t get picked up, you learned not to put it in there,” Fenton said. “People don’t learn now that things aren’t sorted.”

With more non-recyclable items showing up at the plants, the materials are more contaminated after processing, and places like China won’t buy them.

“China basically said we’re taking nothing unless it’s 99 percent clean,” said Scott Hecht, Cary’s public works director. Other countries are now taking America’s recycling, like Turkey and Senegal, but they don’t pay what China did.

Wake County has the lowest contamination in the Triangle, but only because it does things differently. Instead of curbside pickup like Raleigh and Cary have, Wake has 11 convenience centers, three multi-material recycling facilities and three household hazardous waste facilities across the county where residents can drop-off their materials. The sites are monitored to make sure people are using them correctly.

Wake County recycles 6,000 tons of materials a year with a 3% contamination rate, or about 200 tons that is sent to the landfill.

Durham, which recycles 15,000 tons of materials a year with a 15% to 20% contamination rate, produces over 2,000 tons of waste.



Bales of cardboard are loaded onto trucks at the Sonoco Recycling facility on Wednesday, Mar. 7, 2018, in Raleigh, NC. Sonoco is one of many materials recovery facilities (MRFs) in the state affected by China's new strict standards for mixed paper recycling, nearly eliminating the biggest importer of recyclables. This is driving down prices and increasing standards of quality amongst the remaining importers. Casey Toth

CTOTH@NEWSOBSERVER.COM

The contamination rate at the Sonoco processing plant in Raleigh, which takes materials from across the Triangle, is roughly 15%

After past years of revenue, Hecht said Cary is now paying around \$90 a ton to get the town's recycling taken away. That comes out to \$900,000 a year, nearly twice what it was *earning* just a few of years ago, Hect said.

“This year has seen a big challenge for us,” he said.

Cary has increased its sanitation fee from \$16 to \$19.50, partly to maintain recycling, which Hecht says has been enough to help offset rising prices so far.

Orange County pays the least in the area, between \$45 and \$55 a ton. Its contamination rate is closer to 10 percent and lower than the average. Williams said Orange County isn't worried about having to cut any programs, “We'll figure out a game plan before we stop it,” he said.

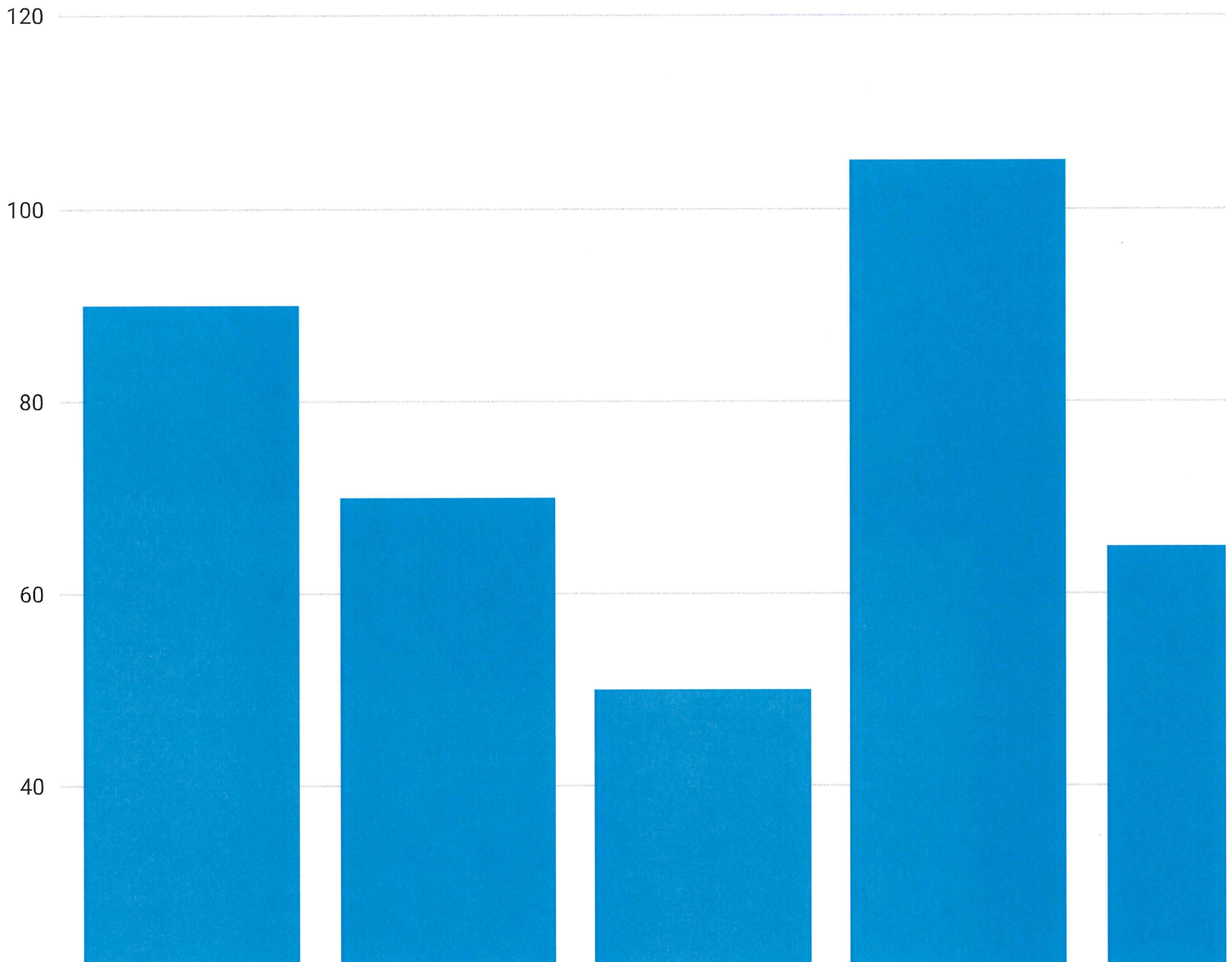
Orange County recently raised its annual waste fee from \$132 to \$142, in part due to rising processing fees.

While Joseph said residents should not worry about an immediate change in their monthly recycling fee, he did say raising fees to help pay higher costs in the future was “not off the table.”

“At the end of the day, there's got to be a business model,” Joseph said. “I see it as an opportunity to change and evolve with it.”

Price per ton of recycling

How much five different areas of the Triangle pay for a processing plant to take a ton of their recycling. Raleigh's price is the recommended amount in the Nov. 19 contract amendment.



“HELP IT GET BETTER”

North Carolina produces more than 11 million tons of waste but recycles 1.6 million tons of material annually in local recycling programs, according to a state news release celebrating Nov. 15 as “America Recycles Day.”

But many still make mistakes that add to the costs.

Inside Orange County’s solid waste services office, Williams has a board listing all of the unusual items the county has seen in recycling bins.

Lawn mower parts, those shoes that I think are called Crocs, diapers, the solid waste director said. “Paint cans, electronics, clothes. We always say donate clothes to Salvation Army or Goodwill, please don’t try to recycle it.”

Around the Triangle, everyone that works in managing recycling agreed on one thing that must be kept out of recycling bins: plastic bags.

Because there is no more curbside sorting, plastic bags holding materials often make their way onto a conveyor belt where they have to be immediately thrown into the trash. Workers don’t open the bags, as a safety measure for fear of needles and other sharp objects.

When this happens, Hecht said, what begins as a well-meaning resident’s recycling, just becomes another load of trash because of the bags.

“The old way was, ‘I’m not sure but I’ll throw it in’ but our new slogan is ‘When in doubt, throw it out,’” Hecht said. “People just need to be more intentional about it.”

Recycling program websites:

- Cary: <https://www.townofcary.org/services-publications/garbage-recycling-yard-waste/recycling/curbside-recycling>
- Durham: <https://durhamnc.gov/866/Recycling-Guidelines>
- Orange County: <https://www.orangecountync.gov/150/A-Z-Recycle-Guide>
- Raleigh: <https://www.raleighnc.gov/recycling>
- Wake County: <http://www.wakegov.com/recycling/recycle/Pages/default.aspx>

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TRENT BROWN



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Trent Brown covers the Town of Cary and other odds and ends. He graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 2019 and is a Collegiate Network fellow.

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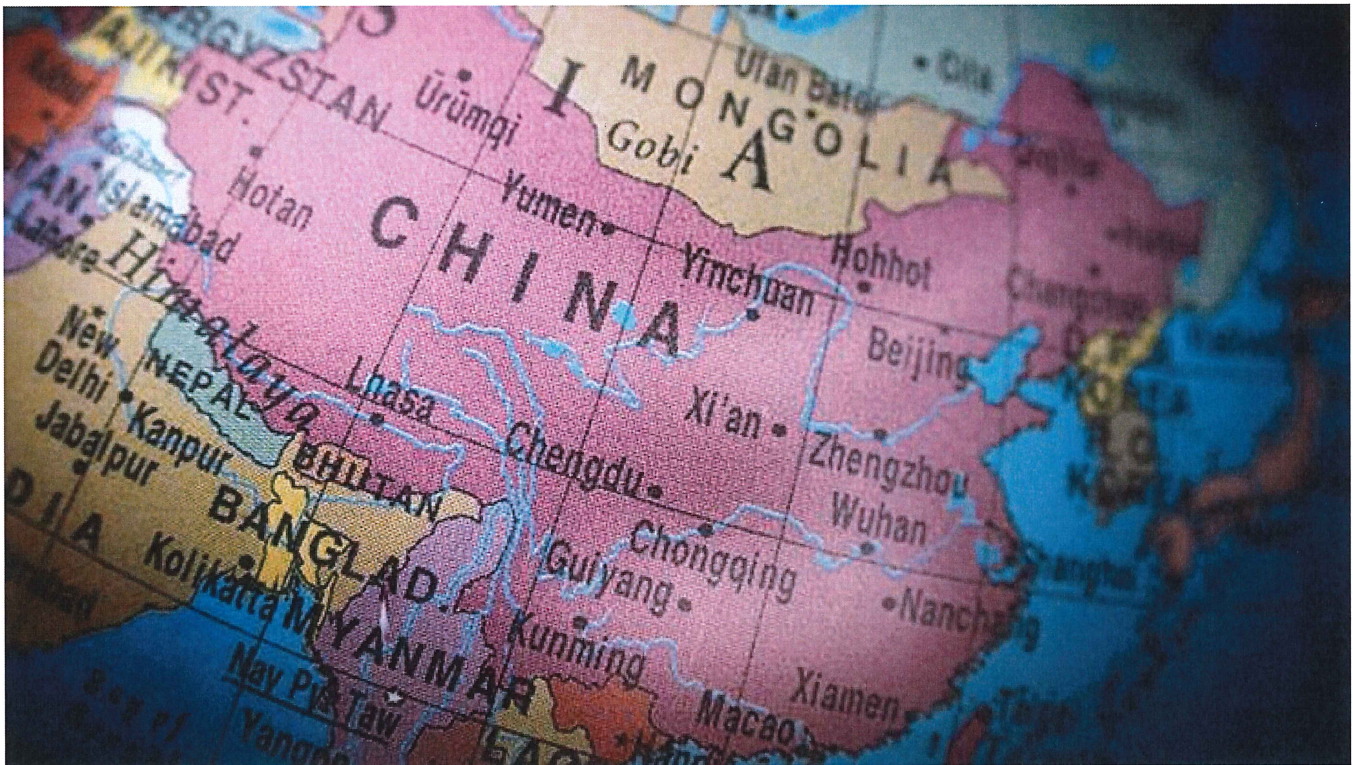
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New SWANA report highlights National Sword impact and solutions

SWANA CEO says local governments have several options preferable to dropping curbside recycling programs.

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September 10, 2019

The Solid Waste Association of North America's (SWANA (<https://swana.org/>)) Applied Research Foundation (ARF (<https://swana.org/Research.aspx>)) has released a new report that provides observations and insights regarding the impacts of China's National Sword Policy on curbside recycling programs in the U.S. and Canada as well as resets that can be made to address them.

China's National Sword policy banned the import of several recyclable materials from all countries – including mixed paper and mixed plastics – on Jan. 1, 2018, and reduced the acceptable level of contamination in scrap and recyclable materials not banned to 0.5 percent, effective March 1, 2018. China also imposed tariffs on many recyclables specifically from the U.S. - including cardboard, other recovered fiber, metals, and plastics - in August 2018.

National Sword has contributed substantially to a 50 percent reduction in the revenues received from the sale of recyclables recovered through curbside recycling, the report found. In addition, it has resulted in increased processing costs and residue rates at material recovery facilities (MRFs).

“The China National Sword policy is providing recycling program managers with an opportunity to reevaluate the costs, funding mechanisms and materials targeted by their curbside recycling programs in an effort to make them more sustainable and effective,” says Jeremy O'Brien, SWANA's Director of Applied Research.



The report, “Resetting Curbside Recycling Programs in the Wake of China,” presents several options that can be implemented to counter the impacts of China's National Sword policy. Some findings from the report include:

- About 65 million households in the U.S. are provided with curbside recycling services. Collectively, these programs divert about nine million tons of recyclables from disposal each year.

- The China National Sword Policy has resulted in about a 50 percent reduction in the revenues received from the sale of recyclables recovered through curbside recycling. This represents a reduction of over \$400 million per year.

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- The major recycling commodities that have been impacted by the China National Sword Policy have been mixed paper, mixed plastics and corrugated containers.
- An analysis of the collection and processing costs and current revenues associated with curbside recycling programs indicates that these programs cost homeowners about \$6.85 per household per month when recyclables are collected on a weekly basis. The impact of the China National Sword policy on MRF recycling revenues and processing costs is estimated to account for \$0.75 per household per month, or about 11 percent of this cost.
- Certain resets to curbside recycling programs can result in cost savings that will more than offset the cost increases resulting from the China National Sword policy. These include the switching of recyclables collection from a weekly to a bi-weekly basis and the switching of glass recycling

from curbside collection to drop-off center recycling.

- Contamination/residue levels at MRFs typically range between 15 percent and 25 percent and are costing curbside recycling programs over \$1 billion per year on a national basis when additional collection and processing costs associated with contamination are considered. While contamination has not been caused by the China National Sword Policy, it has been highlighted and exacerbated by it, SWANA says.

“We expect municipal officials and other key recycling stakeholders will review the important data, conclusions, and recommendations from this ARF report and incorporate them into their recycling programs. Local governments have several options that are preferable to dropping curbside recycling programs,” says David Biderman, SWANA’s executive director and CEO. Biderman adds that this fall will be an active one on the recycling policy front, with the November release of EPA’s long-awaited national recycling framework and congressional activity on bills that would support recycling programs.

The full report, “Resetting Curbside Recycling Programs in the Wake of China,” is currently only available to SWANA ARF subscribers. SWANA members receive free access to ARF industry reports one year after publication.

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RESETTING CURBSIDE RECYCLING PROGRAMS IN THE WAKE OF CHINA



The SWANA Applied Research Foundation's Recycling Group identified the need to provide solid waste managers with up-to-date information and guidance on how to reset curbside recycling programs in the wake of the China National Sword policy implemented in January 2018.

In 2013, China launched a temporary customs program called "Operation Green Fence" aimed at increasing environmental quality by reducing waste importation and contamination in recyclable materials. In 2017, China announced more stringent restrictions that are hereafter referred to as "National Sword."

China's National Sword policy banned the import of several recyclable materials from all countries—including mixed paper and mixed plastics—on January 1, 2018, and reduced the level of contamination in scrap and recyclable materials not banned to 0.5% effective March 1, 2018. China also imposed tariffs on many recyclables specifically from the United States including cardboard, other recovered fiber, metals, and plastics in August 2018.

As China was a major purchaser of recyclable materials from North America and around the world, the China National Sword policy resulted in a significant reduction in demand for these materials and the prices paid for them. In addition, the extremely low new contamination limit of 0.5% forced managers of materials recovery

facilities (MRFs) that processed recyclables collected through municipal recycling programs to reexamine the sources and causes of contamination in their recovered materials.

This report provides a number of important observations and insights regarding the impacts of the China National Sword Policy on curbside recycling programs and the resets that can be made to address them, including the following:

- About 65 million households in the US are provided with curbside recycling services. Collectively, these programs divert about nine million tons of recyclables from disposal each year.
- The China National Sword Policy has resulted in about a 50% reduction in the revenues received from the sale of recyclables recovered through curbside recycling. This represents a reduction of over \$400 million per year.
- The major recycling commodities that have been impacted by the China National Sword Policy have been mixed paper, mixed plastics, and corrugated containers.
- An analysis of the collection and processing costs and current revenues associated with curbside recycling programs indicates that these programs cost homeowners about \$6.85 per household per month when recyclables are collected on a weekly basis. The impact of the China National Sword policy on MRF recycling revenues and processing costs is estimated to account for \$0.75 per household per month or about 11% of this cost.
- Certain resets to curbside recycling programs can result in cost savings that will more than offset the cost increases resulting from the China National Sword policy. These include the switching of recyclables collection from a weekly to a bi-weekly basis and the switching of glass recycling from curbside collection to drop-off center recycling.
- Contamination/residue levels at MRFs typically range between 15% and 25% and are costing curbside recycling programs over \$1 billion per year on a national basis when additional collection and processing costs associated with contamination are considered. While contamination has not been caused by the China National Sword Policy, it has been highlighted and exacerbated by it.

Single Stream Curbside Recycling: St. Petersburg, FL



The full report, "Resetting Curbside Recycling Programs in the Wake of China," is currently only available to SWANA ARF subscribers. SWANA members receive free access to ARF industry reports one year after publication.



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U.S. curbside recycling needs to change

by: Clare Goldsberry in Recycling, Sustainability on October 30, 2019

A recent Phoenix news story noted that the city of Mesa, AZ, has changed its curbside recycling program due to higher costs. Changes include closing three bulk recycling centers and restricting accepted items to plastic beverage bottles and half-gallon and gallon jugs, glass bottles and jars, aluminum and steel cans, and paper.

The recycling program used to cost Mesa \$8 million – \$10 million annually, but the city made about \$800,000 each year selling recycled materials. With the implementation of China's National Sword policy, which banned imports of two dozen types of waste material and restricts contamination levels in others, Mesa estimates it will lose \$500,000 in 2019 and \$1.5 million in 2020.

Contamination is the major problem facing recycling centers and causing higher costs, as more and more recycled materials go to landfills or incinerators.

Mesa isn't alone in its dilemma. Other cities in Arizona and across the country are having the same problems. Traci Conaway, of the city of Chandler, just south of Mesa, said, "We're seeing higher levels of contamination than we've ever seen before."

As I mentioned in a previous blog, the city of Surprise, a suburb northwest of Phoenix, stopped its curbside recycling program completely, leaving it up to consumers to find other recycling bins, such as the large "roll-offs" placed in public areas like parks, in which to recycle.



Unlike Surprise, Mesa isn't going to stop collecting curbside bins, deciding instead to keep collection in place in case recycling comes back in a big way again. But the city hopes that limiting what it will accept in the recycling bins will create cleaner recycle that will generate more revenue.

The Solid Waste Association of North America (SWANA) held its annual WASTECON event in Phoenix last week and announced the publication of an important new report by SWANA's Applied Research Foundation (ARF). The report provides a number of significant observations and insights regarding the impacts of China's National Sword Policy on curbside recycling programs in the United States and Canada, as well as the resets that can be made to address them.

David Biderman, SWANA's executive director and CEO, announced the report, "Resetting Curbside Recycling Programs in the Wake of China," noting that it will be made available to SWANA members for free. "I am very pleased to make this important report available to our members, as it contains useful information that municipal officials and others need during these challenging times, Biderman said, adding that "local governments have several options that are preferable to dropping curbside recycling, and this report provides crucial data, guidance and recommendations that will help them assess these alternatives."

According to the ARF report, the National Sword "has contributed substantially to a 50% reduction in the revenues received from the sale of recyclables recovered through curbside recycling. In addition, it has resulted in increased processing costs at material recovery facilities (MRFs).

Bulk recycling has pretty much been a confusing mess since it started. Europe had a better idea when it began household programs by asking consumers to separate out paper, cans, plastic and glass to reduce the amount of manual sorting needed at the MRFs. Separating by material type is fairly straightforward.

In the United States recycling plastic was never easy, despite the "chasing arrows" scheme that was put in place. All seven numbers are thrown in together, leaving it up to manual sorting at the MRFs to look at the numbers and figure it out.

The problem with this method is that only #1 (PET) and #2 (HDPE) are recyclable and in demand by processors to make new products. The rest — #5 - #7 — are not recycled separately and are often comingled and sent to landfills or incinerated (which is one good way to capture the value of plastics — in its BTU value to create energy).

Should we go back to square one with curbside recycling? Can we really educate consumers enough that they begin to care about what they put into the blue bins? I'm not sure. MRFs find everything imaginable in the recycle that comes from curbside bins. Recently I watched the pool-cleaning person at my neighbor's house across the street dump the leaves he'd gathered from their pool into their recycling bin! Recyclers need clean recycled material, but leaving it up to consumers who don't particularly care what they toss into the blue bins might not be the best way to get it.

SWANA pointed out that next month will be "an active one on the recycling policy front, with the November 15th release of EPA's long-awaited national recycling framework, as part of its America



Recycles Day (ARD) activities.” There will also be continued congressional activity on a variety of bills that would provide financial support to municipal recycling programs.

I hope the plastics industry can be of help in solving the issues surrounding the many types of plastics that are used by consumers every day. Maybe that involves coming up with a new program in which only the most easily recyclable plastics — the type with the most available recycling infrastructure in place — will be taken curbside. The rest might be of more value when taken to a Waste-to-Energy incinerator for electricity generation.

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PLASTECH West returns to the Anaheim Convention Center on Feb. 11 to 13, 2020. The event is co-located with Medical Design & Manufacturing (MD&M) West, along with shows devoted to automation technology, packaging and design. Go to the event website for additional information and to register to attend.

