

Partnership on Waste and Energy

State Action Needed to Expand Recycling Markets

The Partnership on Waste and Energy (PWE) seeks to end waste, promote renewable energy and enhance the health and resiliency of communities we serve while advancing equity and responding to the challenges of a changing climate.

Ambitious state recycling goals will not be met without strong demand for recyclable materials and the products made from them. Robust recycling markets keep useful materials out of landfills and available for companies to make new products. Recycling stimulates the state's economy, creates jobs and saves energy and resources. Stronger state action is needed to generate innovation, expand markets and strengthen demand for products made from recycled materials.

State leadership and investment is needed to expand recycling markets

Minnesota's legislature set recycling goals in state law and has a history of investment in partnerships to build a strong marketplace for recyclables, but other states do more. State recycling goals may not be achievable without a multifaceted approach by the state to expand the use of recyclable materials. Creating new and innovative partnerships with businesses, research institutions and local governments to capture more materials, make new products and divert valuable resources from landfills requires state action in four key areas.

- **Increase Investment in Recycling Market Infrastructure:** Recycling facilities need to update and expand their capacity to process and prepare more materials for industry to use in manufacturing. State policy must provide additional tools and resources to leverage investments in local recycling economies and help industries innovate and grow in Minnesota. These investments provide stability and growth opportunities for our communities' recycling programs.
- **Improve Local Collection Outcomes:** Even with successful curbside and business recycling programs, valuable resources are still ending up in the trash. Increased funding and policy changes that lead to more comprehensive, convenient and consistent collection programs across the state will result in more resources being collected for industry to recycle into new products.
- **Strengthen Demand for Recycled Products:** Recycling will fail and quality resources will end up in landfills if recyclables are not used to make new products, and no one buys those products. State policy should encourage producers to use more recyclables in manufacturing, strengthen government commitments to buy products with recycled content and stimulate consumer demand.
- **Develop Approaches for Innovative, Unique Markets:** Emerging markets and technologies must be welcomed to manage materials beyond those historically collected in recycling programs, such as organics or hard-to-recycle plastics. State policy should encourage innovative technology solutions that deliver environmental and economic benefits, assure recycling capacity to meet state goals and support the marketplace in overcoming regulatory and financial hurdles.

Contact for More Information

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