RAMSEY/WASHINGTON RECYCLING & ENERGY
CONNECTING VALUE TO WASTE

MEETING NOTICE
RAMSEY/WASHINGTON RECYCLING & ENERGY BOARD

Date: Thursday, November 19, 2026
Time: 10 a.m. – noon
Location: Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy Center | 100 Red Rock Road | Newport, MN | 55055 | Tours Building, Mississippi Conference Room | Map
Public: Members of the public are encouraged to participate remotely or may attend at the Newport address. Microsoft Teams | Phone Conference ID: 119 846 382# | Call in (audio only) 1-323-792-6297

AGENDA:

I.	**Call to Order, Introductions**		
II.	**Approval of Agenda**	Action	Page 1
III.	**Approval of Minutes** – October 29, 2026	Action	Page 2
IV.	**Consent Agenda** a. Strategic Coordination of a Governance Structures Assessment RFP Vendor b. Agreement with EcoSafe Zero Waste USA, Inc.	Action	Page 9
V.	**Governance** a. 2027 Board and Committee Meeting Schedule	Action	Page 15
VI.	**Management and Administration** a. Recognition of Commissioner Rafael E. Ortega b. Workshop: Strategic Expansion of Organics Diversion Efforts	Action Information	Page 19 Page 22
VII.	**Policy** a. 2027 Legislative Platform	Action	Page 69
VIII.	**Updates and Reports** a. Commissioner Updates i. Partnership on Waste and Energy b. Executive Director Update c. Strategic Partnerships Update d. Programs Update e. Facility Update f. Procurement Report	Information	Page 72 Page 75
IX.	**Other** a. Invitation for Comments from Ex Officio R&E Board Members: MPCA and City of Newport	Information	
X.	**Adjourn**		

NEXT MEETING: R&E Board | Thursday, January 28, 2027 | 10 a.m. – noon | Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy Center, Newport

RAMSEY/WASHINGTON RECYCLING & ENERGY
CONNECTING VALUE TO WASTE

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2026
RAMSEY/WASHINGTON RECYCLING & ENERGY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

A meeting of the Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy Board (R&E Board) was held at 10 a.m. at the Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy Center (R&E Center), 100 Red Rock Road, Newport, Minnesota. Members of the public attended remotely or in person at the Newport address.

MEMBERS PRESENT
Commissioners Karla Bigham and Bethany Cox – Washington County
Commissioners Mary Jo McGuire and Kelly Miller – Ramsey County

MEMBERS NOT PRESENT
Commissioner Fran Miron – Washington County
Commissioner Rafael Ortega – Ramsey County

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS PRESENT
Anna Hotz – Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA)
Tom Ingemann – City of Newport

ATTENDING AT THE R&E CENTER, NEWPORT
Dave Brummel, Melissa Finnegan, Annalee Garletz, Lianna Goldstein-Rancich, Kelli Hall, Sam Hanson, Caroline Hofmeister, Sam Holl, Nate Klett, Trista Martinson, Deb Orth, Jessica Paquin, Kieu My Phi, Matt Phillips, Mike Rau, Jim Redmond, Gabi Rosenthal, Daniel Schmidt, Rick Varco

ATTENDING REMOTELY
Gary Bruns, Mikaela Campbell, Amy Caron, Reyna Chavez, Tammy Christopherson, Elyse Collyer, Hannah Coyle, Dan Donkers, Tutu Fatukasi, Sam Ferguson, Rae Frank, Jamie Giesen, Cassy Hagen, Abigail Hindson, Filson Ibrahim, Susan Jamison, Fatima Janati, Kathryn Jordan, Hannah Keller, Jennifer Klennert, Peter Lesiak, Kathleen Murphy, Rob Murray, Juna Neisinger, Michelle Palm, Michael Rouch, Madison Staecker, Ryan Tritz, Elizabeth Walsh, Gina Williams, Sherilyn Young

CALL TO ORDER
Chair McGuire called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m. Introductions were made.

AGENDA OF OCTOBER 29, 2026 PRESENTED FOR APPROVAL
Motion by Bigham, seconded by Miller, to approve the agenda. Motion passed.

Ayes: Bigham, Cox, McGuire and Miller.
Nays: None.

MINUTES FROM SEPTEMBER 24, 2026 PRESENTED FOR APPROVAL
Motion by Bigham, seconded by Miller, to approve the minutes of September 24, 2026. Motion passed.

Ayes: Bigham, Cox, McGuire and Miller.
Nays: None.

CONSENT AGENDA

The consent agenda consists of two five-year engineering contracts, one with Foth Infrastructure and Environment, LLC and one with GHD Services, Inc. The Gerdau feasibility study was completed by GHD. R&E Facility Director Sam Holl and R&E Executive Director Trista Martinson are the points of contact related to questions about either organization.

Motion by Bigham, seconded by Miller, to approve Resolution R&EB-2026-18 Consent Agenda. Motion passed.

Ayes: Bigham, Cox, McGuire and Miller.
Nays: None.

MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

2026 Budget Status
Presented by: Matt Phillips, Accounting Manager

Monthly budget status update meetings are held with members of the executive team, and quarterly updates are provided to the R&E Board. R&E Programs Director Sam Hanson provided an update on the Programs budget. The Program Operations line item covers all operational items, such as salaries, insurance, information technology, professional development, etc. Ninety percent of the budget is spent. The variance is mainly due to the switch to a new IT vendor. The cost of upgrades was less than anticipated. The Commercial & Residential Recycling line item relates to grant programs. Grant requests started slowly in 2026. This has rebounded, and there has been a large increase in services and grants, with additional grants anticipated to be issued in November and December 2026. The Community Waste Solution line item relates to bulky waste. There were a record number of applications relative to related programs. Unspent Food Scrap Recycling funds are due to anticipating a full rollout of the Food Scraps Pickup Program by the end of 2026. If Saint Paul had rolled out in 2026, approximately $500,000 would have been spent on bags for the rollout. The 2028-2029 budget planning will be done with a fully rolled out program.

The R&E Programs Fund Balance Policy requires R&E to maintain a minimum fund balance of 20% of the subsequent year's Budget, and up to 35%. If it is 35% or more, the R&E Board may direct R&E on the use of the funds. Historically, it was used to fund the Equipment Maintenance & Replacement Budget deficit.

Facility Director Sam Holl reported on the Facility Budget. July 30, 2026, showed a surplus of $6 million. The current forecast for December 31, 2026, is $3.5 million, which is within 5.3% of the budget. Drivers included a $3.2 million surplus in sortation due to Food Scraps Pickup Program rollout delays. Next year both transfer stations will be sorting at 100%. The $65 million budget includes the employment of 74 union staff, operates the facility 364 days a year with three shifts, and processes 14% of Minnesota's

waste. The 2026 tipping fee is $142. The 2027 tipping fee will be $159. Fuel prices have not been a significant factor because of the fuel index in hauler contracts.

The Equipment Maintenance & Replacement Budget is the capital improvement budget. It is funded by recyclables, along with a $300,000 contribution from the Facility Budget. There is a $172,000 surplus in recyclables. Aluminum prices are at a 12-year high. Expenses are on track. The enterprise reserve fund is also an integral part of the budget as it is being built to alleviate the Counties' obligation to own and operate R&E.

POLICY

2027 Legislative Platform
Presented by: Melissa Finnegan, Strategic Partnerships Manager

The 2027 R&E draft legislative platform was presented for discussion. The platform will be presented to the R&E Board for approval at the November 19, 2026, meeting. A solid waste advisory committee is an added priority. This subject is rising to the top of concerns for counties. There are similar advisory groups on different statewide topics; this is a good approach. R&E will not introduce or lead this legislation but will support the efforts of others on this priority. This is a legislative priority for the Solid Waste Administrators Association. It is also a topic of discussion at the Association of Minnesota Counties.
Regional governance is being moved from a priority item to a policy goal. Work will continue to educate people on the subject, but space is needed for the Counties to work on governance. The waste management hierarchy policy goal is being edited to add wasted food hierarchies.

UPDATES AND REPORTS

Commissioner Updates
Presented by: Mary Jo McGuire, R&E Board Chair

The Association of Minnesota Counties solid waste working group is scheduled to meet on Friday, October 30, 2026. A statewide advisory group will be the main topic.

Executive Director Update
Presented by: Trista Martinson, R&E Executive Director

R&E is working with the Counties on an RFP for an outside third-party to lead the governance structure exploration project. The goal is to have an agreement in place by the end of 2026. R&E is also working with the Counties on the county environmental charge (CEC) ordinance, looking at where there might be gaps in the system and/or in enforcement.

R&E's Food Scraps Pickup Program will be receiving an award at the 2026 Association of Minnesota Counties annual meeting in December 2026.

There is a new yard art installation outside of the R&E tours building. It is a retired rotor from a hammer mill. There are currently two additional pieces of steel by the installation that were delivered to the tipping floor and found in a facility hammer mill.

Strategic Partnerships Update
Presented by: Melissa Finnegan, R&E Strategic Partnerships Manager

R&E was awarded a Climate Smart Food Systems (CSFS) Statewide Prevention of Wasted Food & Food Rescue grant in the amount of $333,333 to establish a food waste accelerator grant program. This will support organizations that work in food recovery and gleaning in the two Counties. R&E was not selected in the current round of vehicle replacement grants. There will be future opportunities for grants to aid in the purchase of an additional electric yard tractor. R&E will apply for an organics management grant. Those funds would support work with commercial organics generators. There will be a full presentation during a workshop on organics expansion at the November 19, 2026, R&E Board meeting.

All registered candidates representing Ramsey and Washington Counties have been invited for R&E Center tours. Sixteen have toured the facility. Invitations will continue after the midterm election. Senator Amy Klobuchar's running mate toured the facility, and the senator referenced Ramsey and Washington Counties' collaborative work on solid waste in a public speech. On November 20, the lieutenant governor and a delegation from Nigeria will tour the R&E Center. It was suggested that a narrative letter from the R&E Board be sent to legislators outlining highlights and goals.

Programs Update
Presented by: Sam Hanson, R&E Programs Director

There was great success with the October 2026 community events, which included a chef-led class and food waste prevention week programming. Communities are uplifting these events. Work is in progress on the 2028-2029 budget. The Green Corps member is now at R&E and will be introduced at the November 19, 2026, R&E Board meeting. Food waste prevention media outreach has been very successful.

Postcards will begin to go out on December 1, 2026, to residents who will become eligible for the Food Scraps Pickup Program during the next rollout.

Multi-Unit Program Coordinator Lianna Goldstein-Rancich reported on the multi-unit landscape. There are 2,900 multi-unit properties (buildings with five or more units) between the two Counties. Washington County. The goal is that every multi-unit reduces, reuses or recycles 75% of their waste. Since 2020, 550 properties have been assisted by R&E. Over $1.9 million in grant funding has been distributed, and 1.3 million pounds of waste has been diverted. Free educational information is available in multiple languages. Grant funding is also available for containers, infrastructure improvements and resident training incentives.

Ongoing technical assistance is provided in partnership with Sustainable Synergy Solutions and EcoConsilium. They provide outreach, complete onsite visits, assist with implementation of best practices and determining right-size service levels, resident education, staff training and grant application assistance.

In 2025, 242 properties received technical assistance. Over $290,000 in grant funding was distributed (29 grants). Thirty training sessions were held, with a total of 499 residents attending. Waste diversion totaled 216,151 pounds, which is equivalent to 119 metric tons of carbon emissions.

Apartment recycling specialists are trained to provide education and support to multi-unit residents. Participants are eligible for a $250 monthly stipend. The program was initiated in September 2026. Residents apply through their apartment manager.

A 12-month pilot program has begun on multi-unit furniture reuse collection. The program is in partnership with Sustainable Synergy Solutions, Bridging and Second Chance Recycling. There are monthly pickups scheduled at four multi-unit residential properties. The goals of this pilot include increasing recovery of reusable furniture, diverting bulky waste from the trash, improving convenient donation opportunities and generating operational and diversion data to evaluate the feasibility of expanding to other multi-unit properties. There is a possibility to expand this program to include senior living and college multi-unit properties. R&E has worked with colleges in the past on other projects.

County ordinances are currently in place regarding recycling for multi-unit residential properties. Compliance enforcement is an issue. Turnover in ownership can also cause gaps. Additional information on this subject is needed. R&E's technical assistance programs provide information to property managers to assist with compliance.

EcoConsilium orchestrated door knocking events at three different properties to increase participation in the Food Scraps Pickup Program at multi-unit senior buildings.

Facility Update
Presented by: Sam Holl, R&E Facility Director

Meetings were held with all haulers in September 2026 to go over tipping fees and share what we are doing at R&E. A load of infectious waste was received on both October 27, 2026, and October 29, 2026. R&E staff await the next legislative session and the MPCA report regarding infectious waste. On November 2, 2026, five R&E apprentices will become journeymen. Holl highlighted the great facility crew. R&E hires employees both from promotion of opportunities and through employee referrals. Additionally, R&E has a partnership with Saint Paul College. There is also a history of employees who have left employment and returned to R&E.

A story was shared regarding a resident who recently lost a wedding ring in the trash. The resident contacted R&E and was able to recover the ring from the R&E Center with the assistance of R&E staff after a three-and-a-half-hour search. Information about this recovery was shared on R&E social media.

Procurement Report
Presented by: Jim Redmond, R&E Contract Manager

Contract Manager Jim Redmond presented the procurement report for September 2026. There were four contracts issued during the month, all relating to the facility. Sixteen grants totaling $139,473 were issued to assist with infrastructure to reduce waste and improve recycling efforts.

R&E has given out 100 grants through October 20, 2026, relating to BizRecycling, multi-unit programming, deconstruction, food waste prevention, food waste recovery and waste

reduction/pollution prevention. Eighty-seven new contracts, contract renewals and amendments to contracts have been executed as well. R&E contracting needs have a wide reach that encompasses a vast number of requirements and subject matter, from heavy equipment rebuilds to community outreach. There were approximately 10 contracts associated with items reviewed at this R&E Board meeting on October 29. Four current R&E contracts and grants were highlighted by Redmond.

Khoo Consulting of Woodbury provides community engagement and cultural consulting services to residents and businesses, particularly those that have been underserved by R&E. A small business certification program (CERT Program) RFP was used to secure Khoo Consulting's services. Khoo Consulting has been working with R&E to increase Food Scraps Pickup Program sign-ups in communities that have been difficult to reach. In 2027, Khoo will be working with R&E to help build relationships in the communities that we serve.

Paffy' Pest Control of Oakdale has been working closely with R&E to control pests at the R&E Center since 2018. Services include managing bait stations around the facility on a bi-monthly basis, as well as all seasonal fly control on the tipping floor. Their services are important to protect the health and safety of staff and R&E equipment and controls.

The Century College Food Shelf in White Bear Lake received a $20,000 grant from R&E to improve the capacity and experience at their food pantry. It specifically helped expand their food rescue operations and serve more students. With the improvements funded by the grant, they were able to expand rescued food available to students from 300 to 3,000 pounds per month, which is a 900% increase. This type of grant is normally used to buy refrigeration equipment or for transportation to get food from local grocery stores. R&E is a large funding source for food rescue in Minnesota.

Ruam Mit restaurant in Saint Paul was awarded a $5,800 grant for bins, compostable bags and three months of organics hauling services for organics recycling. This is expected to cut their waste generation by 50% and result in over 20,000 pounds in waste diversion.

R&E works with partners and consultants to find businesses who could benefit from grant assistance. There are great opportunities for small businesses in Ramsey and Washington Counties. Gratitude was expressed to the contracting department staff on their accomplishments.

OTHER BUSINESS

Invitation for Comments from Ex Officio R&E Board Members

MPCA representative Anna Hotz noted the GreenCorps program and R&E's participation. Hotz also reported that the results of the infectious waste survey are being reviewed. A dedicated staff member has been assigned to this issue. The MPCA is working on the education side as well. The additional odor rulemaking stakeholder sessions will be held before the end of 2026. More information will be coming from the MPCA's community affairs group. Work on prepackaging has had unexpected delays due to staffing. The MPCA is working toward the FAQ portion of the work. Staff are currently reviewing and categorizing comments on the resource management report. The MPCA completed a waste sort. The results showed that 25% of the waste was organic. Paper and plastic were also high on the list. Waste sort requirements are on the horizon. Grant and loan opportunities continue through the Climate Smart Food Systems Grants under the Federal Climate Pollution Reduction Grant Program, as well as grants related to vehicle replacement.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair McGuire adjourned the business meeting at 11:59 a.m.

Next Meeting
The next meeting of the R&E Board will be held on November 19, 2026, at 10 a.m. at the R&E Center in Newport.

ATTEST:

_____
Commissioner Mary Jo McGuire, Chair
November 19, 2026

_____
November 19, 2026

RAMSEY/WASHINGTON RECYCLING & ENERGY
CONNECTING VALUE TO WASTE

R&E BOARD MEETING DATE:	November 19, 2026				**AGENDA ITEM:**	IV.	
SUBJECT:	Consent Agenda						
TYPE OF ITEM:	☐	INFORMATION	☐	POLICY DISCUSSION	☐	ACTION	☒ CONSENT
SUBMITTED BY:	Trista Martinson, R&E Executive Director						

R&E BOARD ACTION REQUESTED:

Approve the Consent Agenda.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Consent agenda items:

- Approve entering into a contract with a vendor selected from the Strategic Coordination of a Governance Structures Assessment RFP process, for an amount up to $250,000, that is selected from an evaluation committee comprised of staff leadership from Ramsey County, Washington County and Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy.
- Approve entering into an agreement with EcoSafe Zero Waste USA, Inc., to continue to provide food scrap bags for the Food Scraps Pickup Program at the agreed upon rates.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PLAN:

Strategic Goal 4A: Strengthened governance that maximizes nimbleness.

Strategic Goal 2B: Effective organics programming (prevention, recovery, recycling) that meets the needs of community and minimizes landfilled food.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Draft Resolution (R&EB-2026-19)
2. EcoSafe Zero Waste USA, Inc. Food Scrap Bags Price Sheet

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The potential budget for the governance assessment is $250,000 and this funding has been approved in the 2026-2027 Programs Budget. The annual budget for food scrap bags is $1,705,000 for 2026, $2,460,000 for 2027, and this funding has been approved in the 2026-2027 Programs Budget.

SUBJECT: *Consent Agenda*

AUTHORIZED SIGNATURES		DATE
R&E EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR		11/12/26
WASHINGTON COUNTY ATTORNEY		11/12/26

RAMSEY/WASHINGTON
RECYCLING & ENERGY
CONNECTING VALUE TO WASTE

RESOLUTION R&EB-2026-19
Consent Agenda

WHEREAS, The Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy Board (R&E Board) is governed by the Amended and Restated Joint Powers Agreement by and between Ramsey County and Washington County dated November 12, 2024 (Joint Powers Agreement); and

WHEREAS, The R&E Board adopted Procurement Guidelines on January 23, 2025 (Resolution R&EB-2025-01), which specify the procurement methods for contracts and purchases; and

WHEREAS, The R&E Board approved the 2026-2027 Joint Activities, Facility and Equipment Maintenance & Replacement (EM&R) budgets on July 24, 2025, in accordance with Section V.B.8 of the Joint Powers Agreement; and

WHEREAS, On October 16, 2026, Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy (R&E), in partnership with Ramsey County and Washington County (Partners), at the direction of their respective boards, released an RFP for the Strategic Coordination of a Governance Structures Assessment, which will secure a contractor to coordinate a full assessment of public governance structures for the management of solid waste generated in Ramsey and Washington Counties; and

WHEREAS, The evaluation team will be comprised of leadership from each of the Partners who will evaluate the proposals and determine the vendor most capable of providing the assessment in a way that suits the needs and concerns of all three Partners; and

WHEREAS, There is up to $250,000 available in R&E's approved 2026 budget to procure the services being contemplated; and

WHEREAS, The Partners recommend approval to enter into a contract of up to $250,000, with a vendor selected by an evaluation team comprised of leadership from all three Partners, and through the RFP process, to perform the governance structures assessment; and

WHEREAS, R&E has been contracting with EcoSafe Zero Waste USA, Inc. to provide food scrap bags for the Food Scraps Pickup Program since the program's inception in 2022, using a contract that is nearing its five-year maximum term; and

WHEREAS, The food scrap bags have reliably met the required program specifications, and the vendor has been a responsive partner when program needs have shifted or needed modifications during the rollout phases; and

WHEREAS, R&E has done exhaustive testing and fine tuning of the robotic sortation equipment over the past five years based on these specific food scrap bags that has aided the success rates of both R&E's sortation system and the systems used by the vendors R&E has contracted with for sortation transload services; and

WHEREAS, R&E staff, as well as the staff of R&E's facility engineer, Foth, strongly recommend continuing with the current food scrap bags, as any disruption in the current Food Scraps Pickup Program sortation system would have a highly negative impact on the success of the program; and

WHEREAS, R&E requested a pricing proposal from EcoSafe Zero Waste USA, Inc. to continue to provide food scrap bags for the next five years, and the pricing is consistent with the pricing in the current contract; and

WHEREAS, R&E staff recommend approval to enter into a contract with EcoSafe Zero Waste USA, Inc., based on the favorable pricing offered, a quality product that meets program specifications, a vendor that serves as a valued Food Scraps Pickup Program partner and a food scrap bag that is integral to the program's success. NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, The R&E Board approves entering into a contract with a vendor selected from the Strategic Coordination of a Governance Structures Assessment RFP process, for an amount up to $250,000, that the Partner leadership evaluation team recommends as the most qualified to meet the needs of all of the Partners. BE IT FURTHER

RESOLVED, The R&E Board approves entering into an agreement with EcoSafe Zero Waste USA, Inc., to continue to provide bags for the Food Scraps Pickup Program at the agreed upon rates. BE IT FURTHER

RESOLVED, The R&E Board authorizes the executive director to execute the agreements, and any amendments or change orders thereto, based on the terms negotiated with the contractors with the option of renewals totaling up to a five-year term, and within the project budget and upon approval as to form by the county attorney.

_____

Mary Jo McGuire, Board Chair
November 19, 2026

_____

Attest
November 19, 2026

ECOSAFE® ZERO WASTE

Renewal Pricing Proposal

REVISED: [Pricing based on updated population projections]

September 2, 2026

Jim Redmond
Ramsey Washington Recycling & Energy
Via Email

RE: Durable Compostable Bag Program – Renewal Pricing

Dear Jim,

It has been a real pleasure supplying the Durable Compostable Bag program for Ramsey Washington over the life of this contract, and as it comes up for renewal we would very much like to keep working with you and your wonderful team. Over the past few weeks, we have spent real time sharpening our numbers and hope that makes staying with EcoSafe as your preferred supplier an easy decision.

The pricing below is about as competitive as we can make it. We went back through the freight on your actual orders across the current term and reworked our costing around what we learned, which along with further volume pricing decreases - thanks to intel from Juna - let us bring the per-bag pricing down. We are running thin margins here — this is priced to keep the work going, the relationship intact, and as a reflection of current market conditions.

Year	Projected Annual Volume (bags)	6 Gallon (per bag)	13 Gallon (per bag)
2027	3,343,982 – 4,458,643	$0.243	$0.394
2028	4,458,643 – 5,573,304	$0.236	$0.382
2029	5,573,304 – 6,687,965	$0.229	$0.370
2030	6,687,965 – 7,802,626	$0.221	$0.358
2031	7,802,626 – 8,917,286	$0.216	$0.350

Volumes shown are projected ranges. Per-bag pricing is set each year from projected annual purchases, as described below.

As we have for the current contract, pricing is reviewed year to year against projected volume. If your purchasing pace supports a better price tier partway through a year, we will move you down to it — and once you are at a lower price, you will not be moved back up within that same year.

A few things that we feel are worth revisiting:

1. **Resin Quality.** Your bags are produced with a BASF PLA-based resin rather than a starch-based one. This gives them better stretch, strength, moisture barrier and puncture resistance to heavy, wet organics and helps them hold together through collection, transport, and sorting — the performance you specifically outlined in the current contract.
2. **Proximity & Relationship.** These bags are manufactured under contract exclusively for EcoSafe through a facility in South Dakota (Dakota Western Corp) with whom we have worked for close to 30 years as our sole production partner for the US market. This lets us produce and ship on a short turnaround and helps insulate your supply from regional weather events and freight delays. The plant is native-owned, operates in a HUB Zone (Historically Underutilized Business Zone) and is managed by a woman.
3. **Communication.** If something is not right, we want to hear about it early and work through it with you. That has been our approach throughout this contract and it will not change. From your end, we can say your team has been phenomenal in bringing conversation points to the fore and we feel that we have addressed them to the best of our ability and to your satisfaction.

Two items of pertinence that have been addressed formerly but I'd like to restate:

- **Print.** We understand that the print has been inconsistent on some bag runs — darker or off-centered impressions and fuzzy text. New printers have been ordered for the plant as of this week, which we expect will tighten up the print registration and resolve most of that.
- **Seam edge.** The scorching you have occasionally noticed along the outer seam of the bags is an aesthetic effect of sealing a thick stack of 1.4 mil compostable film. To bond eight layers in a fraction of a second the sealing plate has to run fairly hot and where the folded edge is offset and only two to four layers thick, that thinner material can melt or look burned. It sits outside the functional seal though — the portion that bears the load and holds the contents stays fully intact — so it does not affect seal integrity, bag strength, moisture retention or how the bag carries, and the bags remain within spec. It's important to note that it's nearly impossible to eliminate the overhang altogether due to equipment tolerances. We are working to reduce the distance but wanted to be forthright with you about what it is and have formerly communicated this with your team.

Because this proposal looks five years out, we would like to carry over the provision from the current agreement that allows for a pricing adjustment if we are hit with an unexpected cost increase outside our control. If that ever came up, we would bring you detailed evidence of the cause and the resulting impact on our costs, and any change would be a discussion and an agreement between the two of us — not something applied on our own.

We would genuinely like to continue our partnership as your supplier, and we are happy to discuss any questions or comments you may have. Thank you for the trust you have placed in us so far.

Best regards,

Michael Turner
Director of Operations
EcoSafe Zero Waste USA Inc.

RAMSEY/WASHINGTON RECYCLING & ENERGY
CONNECTING VALUE TO WASTE

R&E BOARD MEETING DATE:	November 19, 2026			**AGENDA ITEM:**	V.a		
SUBJECT:	2027 Board and Committee Meeting Schedule						
TYPE OF ITEM:	☐	INFORMATION	☐	POLICY DISCUSSION	☒	ACTION	☐ CONSENT
SUBMITTED BY:	Trista Martinson, R&E Executive Director						

R&E BOARD ACTION REQUESTED:

Approve the 2027 Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy (R&E) Board and Committee Meeting Schedule.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The 2027 R&E Board and Committee Meeting Schedule identifies dates for known board and committee meetings. It is possible that meetings may be cancelled or moved, but commissioners will be asked to schedule these dates onto their calendars for 2027.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PLAN:

Strategic Goal 1A: Public awareness and trust through brand management, transparency and engagement.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Draft Resolution (R&EB-2026-20)
2. 2027 R&E Board and Committee Meeting Schedule-DRAFT

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

None.

AUTHORIZED SIGNATURES		**DATE**
R&E EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR		11/4/26
WASHINGTON COUNTY ATTORNEY		11/4/26

RAMSEY/WASHINGTON
RECYCLING & ENERGY
CONNECTING VALUE TO WASTE

RESOLUTION R&EB-2026-20
2027 R&E Board and Committee Meeting Schedule

WHEREAS, The Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy Board (R&E Board) is governed by the Amended and Restated Joint Powers Agreement by and between Ramsey County and Washington County dated November 12, 2024 (Joint Powers Agreement); and

WHEREAS, The Bylaws of the R&E Board state that the board shall meet on a regular basis, with an annual schedule determined at its first meeting each calendar year. NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, The Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy Board approves the 2027 R&E Board and Committee meeting schedule. BE IT FURTHER

RESOLVED, All meetings shall be held at the Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy Center, located at 100 Red Rock Road, Newport, Minnesota, 55055, in the Mississippi Conference Room in the Tours Building, unless otherwise changed by authorization of the board chair.

_____
Mary Jo McGuire, Board Chair
November 19, 2026

_____
Attest
November 19, 2026

SUBJECT: *2027 Board and Committee Meeting Schedule*

RAMSEY/WASHINGTON
RECYCLING & ENERGY
CONNECTING VALUE TO WASTE

2027 R&E BOARD AND COMMITTEE MEETING SCHEDULE

Thursday, January 28	**R&E Board – Organizational and Business Meeting** 10 a.m. – noon | Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy Center – Newport
Thursday, February 11	**Facility & Finance Committee – Business Meeting** 10 – 11:30 a.m. | Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy Center – Newport
Thursday, February 25	**R&E Board – Business Meeting** 10 a.m. – noon | Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy Center – Newport
Thursday, March 11	**Facility & Finance Committee – Business Meeting** 10 – 11:30 a.m. | Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy Center – Newport
Thursday, March 25	**R&E Board – Business Meeting** 10 a.m. – noon | Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy Center – Newport
Thursday, April 8	**Facility & Finance Committee – Business Meeting** 10 – 11:30 a.m.| Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy Center – Newport
Thursday, April 22	**R&E Board – Business Meeting** 10 a.m. – noon | Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy Center – Newport
Thursday, May 6	**Facility & Finance Committee – Business Meeting** 10 – 11:30 a.m. | Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy Center – Newport
Thursday, May 20	**R&E Board – Business Meeting** 10 a.m. – noon | Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy Center – Newport
June TBD	**County Board Workshops** *(exact dates to be determined)*
Thursday, June 10	**Facility & Finance Committee – Business Meeting** 10 – 11:30 a.m.| Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy Center – Newport
Thursday, June 24	**R&E Board – Business Meeting** 10 a.m. – noon | Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy Center – Newport
Thursday, July 8	**Facility & Finance Committee – Business Meeting** 10 – 11:30 a.m. | Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy Center – Newport
Thursday, July 29	**R&E Board – Business Meeting** 10 a.m. – noon | Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy Center – Newport
Thursday, August 26	**R&E Board – Business Meeting** 10 a.m. – noon | Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy Center – Newport

SUBJECT: *2027 Board and Committee Schedule*

RAMSEY/WASHINGTON
RECYCLING & ENERGY
CONNECTING VALUE TO WASTE

Thursday, September 30	**R&E Board – Business Meeting** 10 a.m. – noon | Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy Center – Newport
Thursday, October 28	**R&E Board – Business Meeting** 10 a.m. – noon | Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy Center – Newport
Thursday, November 18	**R&E Board – Business Meeting** 10 a.m. – noon | Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy Center – Newport
Thursday, December 2	**R&E Board or Executive Committee – Business Meeting** 10 a.m. – noon | Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy Center – Newport

RAMSEY/WASHINGTON RECYCLING & ENERGY
CONNECTING VALUE TO WASTE

R&E BOARD MEETING DATE:	November 19, 2026			**AGENDA ITEM:**	VI.a		
SUBJECT:	Recognition of Commissioner Rafael E. Ortega						
TYPE OF ITEM:	☐	INFORMATION	☐	POLICY DISCUSSION	☒	ACTION	☐ CONSENT
SUBMITTED BY:	Trista Martinson, R&E Executive Director						

R&E BOARD ACTION REQUESTED:

Approve the resolution recognizing Commissioner Rafael E. Ortega's long dedication to the Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy (R&E) Board.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The R&E Board would like to recognize Commissioner Ortega for his outstanding dedication to R&E.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PLAN:

N/A

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Draft Resolution (R&EB-2026-21)

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

None.

AUTHORIZED SIGNATURES		**DATE**
R&E EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR		11/4/26
WASHINGTON COUNTY ATTORNEY		11/4/26

RAMSEY/WASHINGTON
RECYCLING & ENERGY
CONNECTING VALUE TO WASTE

RESOLUTION R&EB-2026-21
Recognition of Commissioner Rafael E. Ortega

WHEREAS, The Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy Board (R&E Board) is governed by the Amended and Restated Joint Powers Agreement by and between Ramsey County and Washington County dated November 12, 2024 (Joint Powers Agreement); and

WHEREAS, Ramsey and Washington Counties have committed to continue to protect and ensure the public health, safety, welfare and environment of each County's residents and businesses through sound management of solid and hazardous waste generated in each County; and

WHEREAS, Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy (R&E) provides solid waste services to all residents, businesses and institutions in the Counties, and focuses on the resource value of trash and opportunities presented by increased source separation of recyclables and the addition of new technology to recover value out of trash in the east metro, while diverting as much as possible from landfills and meeting and exceeding the state's recycling goals; and

WHEREAS, Commissioner Rafael E. Ortega has dedicated more than three decades to public service as a member of the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners, making history as the first Latino elected to a county board in Minnesota and establishing a legacy of leadership grounded in equity, opportunity and service to others; and

WHEREAS, Throughout his distinguished tenure, Commissioner Ortega has helped shape the future of Ramsey County through his leadership in transportation, regional infrastructure, economic opportunity, environmental stewardship and the responsible investment of public resources for generations to come; and

WHEREAS, As a dedicated member of the R&E Board, Commissioner Ortega has demonstrated steadfast commitment to the shared vision of vibrant, healthy communities without waste, recognizing that responsible solid waste management is both a fundamental public service and an opportunity to protect our environment, strengthen our economy and improve public health; and

WHEREAS, Commissioner Ortega has supported the evolution of R&E from a traditional waste management partnership into an innovative regional resource recovery organization, advancing responsible governance, strategic investment and the recovery of valuable resources from materials that would otherwise be landfilled; and

WHEREAS, His leadership and support have contributed to R&E's continued progress in landfill diversion, recycling, food scraps recovery, renewable energy development and emerging technologies that move our region toward a more sustainable and circular economy; and

WHEREAS, Commissioner Ortega has understood that meaningful environmental progress requires vision, collaboration, courage and the willingness to make decisions today whose greatest benefits may be realized by future generations; and

WHEREAS, His commitment to partnership between Ramsey and Washington Counties has strengthened a nationally significant model of regional cooperation, demonstrating that governments can achieve more when they work together with shared purpose, mutual respect and accountability to the communities they serve; and

WHEREAS, Throughout his service to R&E, Commissioner Ortega has brought the perspective of an experienced public servant, a commitment to sound governance and an enduring belief in the power of public institutions to create lasting positive change. NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, That the Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy Board hereby extends its sincere gratitude and appreciation to Commissioner Rafael E. Ortega for his distinguished public service, steadfast dedication to R&E and lasting contributions to the people of Ramsey and Washington Counties. BE IT FURTHER

RESOLVED, That the R&E Board recognizes Commissioner Ortega's legacy of environmental leadership, regional partnership and public stewardship, and honors his contributions to building a more resilient, sustainable and responsible future for the communities R&E serves. BE IT FURTHER

RESOLVED, That Commissioner Ortega carries with him the respect, appreciation and gratitude of the R&E Board, its leadership and its employees, whose work and mission have been strengthened by his years of service.

_____

Mary Jo McGuire, Board Chair
November 19, 2026

_____

Attest
November 19, 2026

RAMSEY/WASHINGTON RECYCLING & ENERGY
CONNECTING VALUE TO WASTE

R&E BOARD MEETING DATE:	November 19, 2026				**AGENDA ITEM:**	VI.b	
SUBJECT:	Workshop: Strategic Expansion of Organics Diversion Efforts						
TYPE OF ITEM:	☒	INFORMATION	☐	POLICY DISCUSSION	☐	ACTION	☐ CONSENT
SUBMITTED BY:	Trista Martinson, R&E Executive Director						

R&E BOARD ACTION REQUESTED:

For workshop discussion.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The diversion of organic waste materials (organics) is a critical component of solid waste management in Ramsey and Washington Counties and the surrounding region. Counties have targeted organics in past and current solid waste management plans, investing in programming, policy, infrastructure and partnerships to address it. Waste characterization studies as recent as 2025 show that organics remains the largest material category in the waste stream, indicating that barriers and gaps persist. In 2026, R&E conducted a series of planning and development efforts to meet contractual commitments and advance long-term organics management goals.

This workshop will provide findings and recommendations from R&E's 2026 assessment of opportunities to expand source-separated organics recycling in the commercial sector, including businesses, public entities and academic institutions. The workshop's purpose is to support R&E Board discussion and direction on the approach and strategy to advance and sustain commercial organics diversion beginning in 2027.

R&E's facility engineering consultant, Foth Infrastructure & Environment (Foth), conducted a multi-stage assessment that initiated with the identification of regional food waste generation, material flows, processing capacity, potential market sectors and participation barriers. From this comprehensive baseline, Foth evaluated key factors and provided recommendations for establishing critical market development foundations, leveraging partnerships and undertaking targeted actions to secure and sustain organics diversion efforts. From this assessment, R&E staff have developed a proposed action plan for board consideration.

R&E staff will present the key findings and proposed next steps and seek board feedback to guide planning, resource allocation and implementation efforts. The primary questions for board discussion are:

What approach should R&E take to meet its obligations and advance its goals on non-residential organics recycling? How should this approach be reflected in areas such as resource allocation, engagement, operations, infrastructure development and partnership strategies?

The accompanying materials summarize consultant and staff analyses and are intended to inform R&E Board discussion on priorities, actions and investments for commercial organics diversion in both the current and upcoming budget cycles.

SUBJECT: *Workshop: Strategic Expansion of Organics Diversion Efforts*

Workshop Outline

1. Introduction and workshop purpose
2. Organics diversion background and current state
3. Foth assessment findings
4. Strategic significance and recommendations
5. Questions and discussion

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PLAN:

Initiative 2B.iii: Expand organics recycling to businesses.

Initiative 3B.i: Evaluate market potential, capacity and opportunities to expand current markets and infrastructure.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Staff memorandum: Strategic Approach to Expanding Organics Diversion to the Commercial Sector
2. Foth report: Assessment of Strategies for Expanding Organics Diversion

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

None.

AUTHORIZED SIGNATURES		**DATE**
R&E EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR		11/12/26

RAMSEY/WASHINGTON RECYCLING & ENERGY
Reduce. Recover. Reimagine.

November 12, 2026

To: Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy Board

From: Trista Martinson, Executive Director; Leigh Behrens, Planning Manager

Re: **Strategic Approach to Expanding Organics Diversion to the Commercial Sector**

Background

In Minnesota, counties are identified as the unit of local government responsible for the management of solid waste. This responsibility includes meeting statutory requirements and advancing state policy objectives, such as:

- Developing and implementing County Solid Waste Management Plans
- Aligning with the Metropolitan Solid Waste Management Policy Plan
- Achieving a 75% recycling rate by the end of 2030
- Applying statutorily-established frameworks such as the Solid Waste Management Hierarchy and Wasted Food Hierarchy
- Contributing to Minnesota's carbon-free energy standard by 2040 through resource recovery and related technologies

Beyond regulatory compliance, effective solid waste management also provides significant public benefits, including:

- Conservation of natural resources
- Preservation of land and improved soil, water and air quality
- Climate protection through greenhouse gas emission reduction
- Healthy, safe and vibrant communities
- Local jobs and economic activity

Managing municipal solid waste (MSW) is inherently complex due to the diverse and ever-evolving nature of the waste stream. No single program, policy or technology can effectively manage all materials discarded by the residential, commercial, industrial and institutional sectors. As a result, solid waste managers regularly apply a systems-based approach that integrates research, engagement, technical expertise and robust analysis to inform investment and policy decisions while maintaining diligent stewardship of public funds and resources.

No material stream better illustrates the need for this approach than organics. Broadly defined as biodegradable materials that can be broken down by microorganisms, organics include food scraps, non-recyclable paper and other compostable products. Organics make up between 24% and 35% of the residential and commercial waste by weight. However, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, food waste is responsible for about 58% of landfill emissions, the single largest contributor to landfill-generated methane. Because organics vary widely in composition and sources, effective management requires a strategic array of programs, policy, partnerships, infrastructure and investments tailored to local conditions and needs.

In Ramsey and Washington Counties, organics management is a longstanding priority. Investments in residential organics recycling programs include community food scraps drop-off sites, public education initiatives and the Food Scraps Pickup Program. In recent years, additional resources have also been directed toward food waste prevention and food recovery efforts, such as working with food shelves to connect surplus food with community members in need.

Programs like BizRecycling advance organics diversion within key non-residential sectors, but significant opportunities remain. Non-residential sectors create about 65% of the food waste generated in Minnesota, indicating a high priority area for diversion gains needed to meet obligations, recycling goals and climate objectives. However, implementing organics recycling in the non-residential sector differs substantially from the existing residential approach, due to the distinct logistical needs and financial considerations that influence businesses' operations and decision-making. In 2026, Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy (R&E) conducted a series of planning and analysis efforts to develop recommendations to address these barriers.

East Metro Organics Diversion System Development

The foundation for this work began more than a decade ago. In 2014, the predecessor to R&E, the Resource Recovery Project (RRP), conducted a comprehensive evaluation of future waste processing needs and the potential acquisition of the facility now known as the R&E Center. As part of that effort, RRP staff and consultants assessed the Counties' ability to achieve a 75% recycling rate by 2030. The analysis projected that, without significant new investments and diversion strategies, the Counties could only expect to achieve a recycling rate of about 53%. The report to the R&E Board put forward an alternative scenario that combined increased source-separation from residential and commercial sources, advanced sortation technology at the Newport facility to recover recyclables and organics from MSW (then known as mixed-waste processing), and new technologies to more effectively and efficiently manage organics and refuse-derived fuel feedstocks.

Subsequently, the RRP Board adopted the Scope for Resource Management, a roadmap to guide system design and future policy decisions. The Scope for Resource Management included the alternative scenario elements, denoting increasingly intense efforts to implement source-separated recycling and organics, constructing a mixed-waste processing line in Newport and procuring partnerships to develop anaerobic digestion and gasification technologies. At the end of 2015, Ramsey and Washington Counties purchased the R&E Center and entered into a new joint powers agreement that established R&E.

In 2018, Ramsey and Washington Counties each approved their 2018-2038 Solid Waste Management Plans (Plans). The Ramsey County Plan highlighted non-residential organics management as critical to its goals:

> *"Separate management of organics by non-residential entities is a necessary component of waste management in Ramsey County in order to reach a 75% recycling goal. Ramsey County expects non-residential entities to make progress during the term of this plan to incorporate the separate management of organics."*

Both Ramsey and Washington Counties' 2018-2038 Plans also include language about implementing the elements from the Scope of Resource Management:

"Ramsey and Washington Counties will continue work as identified in its Scope for Resource Management, an integrated vision of recycling, organics and processing. The Scope strongly supports the waste hierarchy and the food waste hierarchy in managing waste higher on the hierarchy. As described in the August 2016 MPCA-approved Washington County Amendment Number 1 to the Solid Waste Master Plan, the Scope for Resource Management includes:

a. *Increased source separation efforts for recycling and organics from residential and non-residential waste generators;*
b. *The use of mixed waste processing to recover some recyclables and organics that remain in mixed municipal solid waste;*
c. *Organic waste being used as a feedstock for anaerobic digestion; and*
d. *A transition from using refuse derived fuel (RDF) for electrical generation to using RDF for gasification to produce transportation fuels and other products."*

Between 2015 and 2018, R&E conducted an extensive evaluation to develop the East Metro solid waste system and advance state and county goals. More than 20 studies, reports and analyses culminated in a March 2019 R&E Board workshop that presented a $42 million capital improvement plan for the R&E Center. The proposed enhancements included a food scrap bag separation system and the installation of advanced sorting technology known as the Recyclables Recovery System. In May 2019, the board unanimously approved a resolution expressing its intent to proceed with the project and authorized financing and procurement plan development. The project received $7 million of funding support through a state bonding appropriation in 2020. Construction began in April 2021, and the enhancements were completed in July 2023.

The facility enhancements, once fully operational, are projected to increase annual diversion through the recovery of approximately 9,000 additional tons of recyclables, 30,000 tons of source-separated organics in food scrap bags and 24,000 tons of organic-rich material (ORM). ORM is produced by the Recyclables Recovery System, which mechanically separates food waste, wet or soiled paper and other organic materials from the trash. Unlike source-separated organics, which typically contain minimal (less than 5%) contamination, ORM contains a substantially higher proportion of non-organic materials (around 40%) and cannot be managed through traditional composting processes. Prior analyses, however, identified anaerobic digestion as an effective management pathway for ORM due to its ability to convert it into renewable natural gas, a carbon-negative fuel that can replace fossil natural gas.

In August 2020, R&E initiated a new phase of implementing the Scope of Resource Management by seeking vendors to manage key materials produced at the R&E Center, including source-separated food scraps and ORM. A two-phase, technology-agnostic procurement process was conducted between 2020 and 2022, after which, the R&E Board directed staff to enter direct negotiations with two anaerobic digestion providers. In March 2023, staff recommended Dem-Con HZI Bioenergy, LLC (Dem-Con) as the preferred partner to manage food scraps and ORM. The R&E Board approved a 20-year Feedstock Supply Agreement with Dem-Con in September 2023.

The original agreement required Dem-Con to certify key pricing terms within 12 months. When those terms could not be certified, R&E and Dem-Con negotiated an amendment to revise key provisions and maintain project viability. As part of the amended agreement, R&E committed to supplying an additional 15,500 tons of source-separated organics annually beyond projected quantities from the Food Scraps Pickup Program. This commitment adds additional weight to both the need and urgency to expand

organics collection opportunities prior to the anticipated startup of the anaerobic digestion facility at the end of 2027.

Since completion of the R&E Center enhancements, expanding organics collection has been a primary strategic priority. The Food Scraps Pickup Program began to roll out in October 2023 and has continued to expand to additional communities, with full availability in the two Counties anticipated by the first half of 2027. Implementation of the program has included significant investments in outreach, education, community engagement and program optimization to support long-term adoption and performance. In parallel, BizRecycling has increased its focus on organics recycling in the past year and can update grant programs and technical assistance efforts to support R&E's broader strategic approach once key logistical elements are in place.

In early 2026, recognizing the need to develop source-separated organics beyond what is projected from existing programs alone, R&E retained engineering consultant Foth Infrastructure & Environment, LLC (Foth) to conduct a comprehensive assessment. The resulting report, provided for the November 19, 2026, R&E Board workshop, assesses current conditions, identifies barriers and opportunities and discusses recommendations for increasing organics diversion among businesses and institutions throughout the region. From Foth's assessment and additional engagement efforts, R&E staff have developed a proposed action plan for board consideration.

Strategic Significance

Based on the policy context, prior planning efforts and the findings of the Foth assessment, expanding organics recycling within the commercial sector represents a critical strategic priority for Ramsey and Washington Counties. Implementing robust commercial organics diversion is necessary to fulfill contractual commitments, achieve compliance with state mandates and policy objectives, and strengthen the East Metro solid waste system. Key strategic considerations include:

Achievement of state mandates and county goals. Facing a largely static recycling rate since 2018, substantial and decisive efforts in facilitating commercial organics recycling are needed to progress the recycling, waste diversion and climate objectives established by state statute and the county solid waste management plans.

Contractual commitment and risk management. Increasing the recovery of source-separated organics from a diverse portfolio of non-residential generators will ensure sufficient material quantities are delivered to meet commitments associated with the Dem-Con Feedstock Supply Agreement and reduce the risk of fee penalties due to capacity or supply shortfalls.

Regional leadership and partnership. Advancing organics diversion requires coordinated action across jurisdictions, sectors and industries. Through continued investment in organics management programs and infrastructure, Ramsey County, Washington County and R&E would be well positioned to demonstrate regional leadership in sustainable materials management. The strategies and partnerships developed through these efforts can serve as a model across Minnesota while strengthening collaboration with public entities, businesses, institutions and industry partners that have shared challenges and common goals. Such relationships will be essential to achieving long-term waste diversion and environmental goals.

Long-term system development and resilience. Meeting future organics diversion and feedstock supply needs will require more than expanded collection programs alone. Success will depend on strategic investments in organics transportation, transfer capacity, processing infrastructure and the organizational resources needed to support and sustain commercial program development. As R&E has experience firsthand with the Food Scraps Pickup Program, establishing strong participation in source-separated organics recycling will require active and continuous engagement with generators, haulers and industry partners rather than reliance on passive market availability. By building a more diverse and integrated organics management system, the region will be better positioned to not only meet its commitments, but also respond to changing market, regulatory conditions and waste generation patterns. This has the outcome of facilitating a robust, resilient integrated solid waste system in the long term.

Recommendations

Staff's recommendations comprise a focused strategy built around three core pillars:

1. **Build system capacity and reduce barriers** by addressing organizational, operational and infrastructure limitations that constrain long-term program growth.
2. **Pursue the highest-return opportunities first** by targeting generators and efforts that offer the greatest diversion potential with the lowest implementation risk, effort level and cost.
3. **Maximize external resources and partnerships** by leveraging public funding, supportive policy frameworks and regional collaboration to expand program reach and impact.

Recommendation 1: Establish organics collection at Ramsey and Washington County facilities
Organics collection within county-owned and operated facilities is immediate "low-hanging fruit." Several county facilities with food service operations, including correctional, healthcare and other institutional settings, present opportunities to deliver consistent sources of food waste to the Dem-Con anaerobic digester, furthering compliance and county environmental goals. Beginning within the Counties' own operations establishes reliable baseline tonnage that lacks the barriers commonly encountered with external entities and the private sector.

Recommendation 2. Allocate Dedicated Staff Capacity for Commercial Organics Diversion
Successfully expanding commercial organics recycling will require sustained outreach, relationship management, logistics, subject matter expertise and program development. Staff recommend the allocation of a dedicated full-time equivalent staff person to coordinate commercial diversion activities, including engagement with BizRecycling grantees, coordination with waste service providers, identification of and connection with new generators, and assistance with transportation and collection logistics. A dedicated resource would focus on converting identified opportunities into long-term diversion partnerships and providing ongoing support to participating businesses and institutions to avoid attrition.

Recommendation 3: Facilitate Infrastructure to Support Regional Organics Management
Bottlenecks and limitations in the organics collection, delivery and processing infrastructure need to be eliminated for cost effective, feasible and sustained organics management in the metropolitan area. A key opportunity is to improve organics transfer and aggregation capacity, reducing transportation costs and barriers for generators and haulers. Staff recommend actively pursuing state and federal funding

opportunities to support infrastructure improvements, collection systems, equipment and other investments that create new diversion opportunities and strengthen the regional organics management system.

Recommendation 4: Develop Feedstock Agreements with Large Commercial Generators.
As discussed in the Foth report, emphasis should be placed on building a diversified portfolio of generators rather than relying on any single source, providing R&E with greater long-term reliability and resilience. Staff recommend pursuing formal partnerships, such as contracts, with large generators, starting with those identified in Foth's assessment. Potential partners include educational campuses, healthcare facilities, food manufacturers, grocers, wholesale operations and other organizations generating recurring volumes of source-separated organics that do not have a feasible outlet higher on the hierarchy. Pilot projects may be valuable to employ where appropriate to validate tonnage, material quality and operational requirements before entering into long-term agreements.

Recommendation 5: Support Statewide Organics Diversion Policy Initiatives
Staff recommend continuing to support statewide policy efforts that expand organics diversion requirements for large commercial and institutional generators. A statewide organics recycling mandate would create new diversion opportunities and increase participation in organics collection programs across Minnesota. While any future mandate would likely be implemented over several years through a phased approach, policy development and implementation are important long-term strategies for increasing the source-separation of organics and supporting regional diversion goals.

Collectively, these recommendations balance operational effectiveness, financial stewardship, risk management and long-term system development. Through planful and proactive investment, strategic partnerships and targeted program growth, R&E can build the capacity necessary to meet future organics diversion needs while continuing to serve as a regional leader in sustainable materials management.

Foth

Report

Assessment of Strategies for Expanding Organics Diversion



Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy

Newport, Minnesota

November 2026

Project ID: 26R002.00

Solving our clients' toughest science and engineering challenges.

Assessment of Strategies for Expanding Organics Diversion

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Assessment of Strategies for Expanding Organics Diversion

Project ID: 26R002

Prepared for
Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy
100 Red Rock Road
Newport, MN

Prepared by
Foth Infrastructure & Environment, LLC

November 2026

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Assessment of Strategies for Expanding Organics Diversion

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Assessment of Strategies for Expanding Organics Diversion

Executive Summary

In early 2026, Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy (R&E) retained Foth Infrastructure & Environment, LLC (Foth) to identify and evaluate opportunities to divert source separated organics (SSO) from non-residential food waste generators such as businesses, public entities and academic institutions. The project advances R&E's strategic goals while supporting the organization's stewardship of public funds and ability to meet its obligations.

Foth's assessment confirmed that there is no shortage of food waste in the regional market. Minnesota generates an estimated 1.06 million tons of food waste annually, according to ReFED Inc., with substantial quantities from manufacturing, foodservice, retail, residential, and institutional sources[1]. Within the seven-county metro alone, an estimated 582,700 tons of food waste are generated annually, compared with approximately 80,400 tons of combined SSO that are reported by the counties as being recycled in 2024 in their annual SCORE reports. This difference demonstrates considerable additional diversion potential, but should not be interpreted as SSO readily available to R&E. The challenge is determining if the SSO tons are actually available, suitable, reliable, and practical for R&E to secure.

Much of the SSO identified through the assessment already moves through an established regional organics management system that includes composting, anaerobic digestion, food to livestock, food rescue, land application, and other beneficial uses. Material economics also vary considerably. Some generators pay to dispose of or process SSO, while certain clean manufacturing residuals have positive market value. As a result, the largest or cleanest material streams are not necessarily the most attainable or economical opportunities for R&E.

Foth identified potential opportunities across a diverse range of generators, including food manufacturers, institutions, schools and universities, healthcare and correctional facilities, grocery and wholesale operations, public facilities, event venues, freight and logistics operations, and existing residential and commercial collection programs. The assessment also identified opportunities that extend beyond individual generators, including coordination with other metro counties, expansion of R&E's Food Scraps Pickup Program, aggregation of smaller generators, and development of underserved material streams that lack reliable management outlets.

To meet its goals and commitments, R&E will need a diversified portfolio consisting of dependable baseline SSO feedstock supplemented by seasonal, event-driven, rejected-load, and other opportunistic tons. The strongest opportunities are those where R&E can create new diversion, solve an existing management problem, provide a logistical or economic advantage, or address limitations within the existing organics management system.

Foth recommends that R&E move from generator identification to active diversion program development. This will require dedicated staff and resources to pursue generators, maintain relationships, conduct targeted marketing, evaluate economics, develop pilots, negotiate pricing and contract terms, and convert identified opportunities into long-term commitments. R&E

[1] ReFED, Inc. Food Waste Monitor webpage, https://insights-engine.refed.org/food-waste-monitor?break_by=destination&indicator=tons-waste&state=MN&view=detail&year=2024

Executive Summary (continued)

should also leverage the tools already available through its partnership, including Ramsey and Washington Counties, BizRecycling, partnership transfer stations, the Food Scraps Pickup Program, grant funding, regional partnerships, and public policy.

The regional market contains sufficient food waste to advance SSO diversion, but securing the tons that exist in the market will require additional efforts. Meeting R&E's goals and commitments will require sustained market engagement, targeted investment, and a deliberate strategy focused not simply on finding organics, but on building a resilient portfolio capable of reliably diverting food waste from landfills year after year.

List of Abbreviations, Acronyms, and Symbols

AD	anaerobic digestion
Agreement	Feedstock Supply Agreement
Dem-Con	Dem-Con HZI BioEnergy, LLC
Foth	Foth Infrastructure & Environment, LLC
MPCA	Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
MSW	municipal solid waste
OFS	organic food scraps
ORM	organic-rich materials
R&E	Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy
ReFED	ReFED, Inc.
SSO	source-separated organics

Definitions

Anaerobic digestion	A biological process of digesting organic materials (e.g., food waste, animal manure, wastewater biosolids) in the absence of oxygen to create usable byproducts (e.g., digestate, biogas).
Compost	A biologically stable soil amendment produced by the aerobic decomposition of organic materials.
Composting	A biological process that decomposes organic materials (e.g., food waste, leaves, grass clippings, and other yard waste) by microorganisms in the presence of oxygen.
Food scraps	Organic, compostable remnants of food preparation and consumption (e.g., peels, trimmings, bones, kitchen and table waste).
Food waste	Overarching term to describe all food that is not eaten – edible and inedible.
Generator	Any person, business, or entity responsible for the creation or production of organic waste.
Land application	A diversion method that involves directly applying organic materials to agricultural fields to reintroduce nutrients into the soil (e.g., spreading, spraying) to enhance soil quality and reduce the need for synthetic fertilizers.
Non-residential	Any commercial, industrial, institutional, or agricultural location that generates organics material outside of private residential households.
Organics	Any biodegradable material that can be broken down naturally by microorganisms.
Organics diversion	The practice of preventing organic materials (e.g., edible food, food scraps) from being disposed of in landfills or waste-to-energy incinerators by redirecting toward higher value uses (e.g., food rescue, animal feed, composting).
Organic rich material	The biodegradable organic portion of municipal solid waste under two-inch fraction that is sorted and recovered at the Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy Facility.
SCORE report	Minnesota's annual statewide summary of recycling, waste generation, and waste management data prepared by MPCA. The report compiles solid waste, recycling, and reuse data from solid waste officials in Minnesota's 87 counties and the Western Lake Superior Sanitary District and evaluates whether counties meet statutory recycling goals. The SCORE report assists with aiding local governments with developing solid waste management plans.
Source-separated organics	Compostable waste materials (e.g., food waste) that are collected separately from other waste streams at the point of generation and temporarily stored at a designated collection site before being transported to an organics processing facility.

1. Introduction

Diverting food waste and other organic materials from landfill disposal preserves valuable resources while reducing the environmental impacts associated with disposal. When landfilled, organic materials decompose and generate methane, a potent greenhouse gas that traps heat in the atmosphere, contributing significantly to climate change. Of the estimated 1.06 million tons of food waste generated annually in Minnesota according to ReFED Inc. (ReFED), approximately 275,600 tons are disposed of in landfills as mixed solid waste (MSW)[2]. Organics diversion creates opportunities to recover value through beneficial uses, such as food rescue and anaerobic digestion. Expanding organics diversion supports Ramsey and Washington Counties' goals of achieving 75% recycling rates by moving materials up the waste management hierarchy.

As a part of Ramsey and Washington Counties' strategies and goals on organics diversion, the Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy (R&E) Board began a procurement in 2020 for an end-market provider to recycle food waste and other organic materials from the waste stream. In 2023, the R&E Board approved a Feedstock Delivery Agreement (Agreement) with Dem-Con HZI BioEnergy, LLC. (Dem-Con) for the anaerobic digestion (AD) of source-separated organics (SSO) and organic-rich materials (ORM) for a 20-year term.

The Second Amendment to the Agreement, dated November 14, 2024, commits R&E to securing 15,500 tons per year of SSO beyond its original commitment of 30,000 tons per year from the Food Scraps Pickup Program (FSPP). Dem-Con's AD facility is currently anticipated to begin commissioning in Q4 2027 to Q1 2028. The Second Amendment establishes minimum processing fees of $122 per ton for SSO and $132 per ton for ORM, as well as the mechanism for fee adjustments based on actual tonnages delivered.

This feedstock requirement is the basis for R&E's Organics Expansion Assessment Project. Table 1-1 summarizes R&E's contractual feedstock commitments under the Second Amendment.

Table 1-1
Contractual Commitments for Annual FSPP and ORM Tonnages

Year	FSPP Commitment Minimum (tons/year)	FSPP Commitment Maximum (tons/year)	Additional SSO Commitment (tons/year)	ORM (tons/year)	Total Annual Commitment Minimum (tons/year)	Total Annual Commitment Maximum (tons/year)
Prior to AD Commencement	0	0	15,500	0	15,500	15,500
2027[1]	16,244	18,720	15,500	20,000	51,724	54,220
2028	22,786	26,292	15,500	20,000	58,286	61,792
2029	26,634	30,000	15,500	20,000	62,134	65,500

[2] ReFED, Inc. Food Waste Monitor webpage, https://insights-engine.refed.org/food-waste-monitor?break_by=destination&indicator=tons-waste&state=MN&view=detail&year=2024

Table 1-1 continued

Year	FSPP Commitment Minimum (tons/year)	FSPP Commitment Maximum (tons/year)	Additional SSO Commitment (tons/year)	ORM (tons/year)	Total Annual Commitment Minimum (tons/year)	Total Annual Commitment Maximum (tons/year)
2030 and beyond	30,000	30,000	15,500	20,000	65,500	65,500

Notes: Prepared by: MLM4
FSPP = Food Scraps Pickup Program Checked by: NOK
SSO = source separated organics
ORM = organic rich materials
[1] To be adjusted for first calendar year after AD Commencement Date.

In early 2026, R&E retained Foth Infrastructure & Environment, LLC (Foth) to identify non-residential sources of SSO needed to support county organics diversion goals and R&E's contractual commitments to Dem-Con.

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of the Organics Expansion Assessment Project is to advance R&E's strategic organics diversion goals while supporting its commitments and obligations under the Agreement and Amendments with Dem-Con. The project focused on identifying viable SSO generators, evaluating procurement and partnership opportunities, and developing a practical strategy to expand organics diversion, secure reliable sources of SSO, and reduce the financial and operational risks associated with meeting R&E's long-term contractual commitments.

1.2 Scope of Work

Foth's scope focused on identifying and prioritizing potential non-residential SSO sources, engaging priority generators to assess available tonnage and partnership opportunities, and evaluating the logistics, costs, risks, and funding considerations. The work also included developing recommendations and an implementation strategy, followed by targeted engagement and coordination to support R&E in establishing partnerships that further develop and sustain SSO diversion.

2. Background Information

2.1 Minnesota SSO Landscape

According to ReFED, Minnesota generated an estimated 1.06 million tons of food waste in 2024, with approximately 60% generated by the manufacturing, food service, and retail sectors. ReFED defines food waste as an overarching term used to describe all food that is not eaten – edible and inedible. Manufacturing represents the largest single source at approximately 392,000 tons per year, followed by residential at 352,000 tons, food service at 203,000 tons and retail at 40,700 tons. Residential food waste is currently being managed in Ramsey and Washington Counties through the FSPP. Food waste tons generated by sector in Minnesota in 2024 are highlighted in the table below.

Table 2-1
Tons of Food Waste Generated in Minnesota, 2024

Sector	Food Waste Generated (tons)	% of Total Minnesota Food Waste
Manufacturing	392,000	37.1%
Residential	352,000	33.4%
Food Service	203,000	19.2%
Farm (Produce Only)	67,500	6.4%
Retail	40,700	3.9%
Total	**1,055,200**	**100.0%**

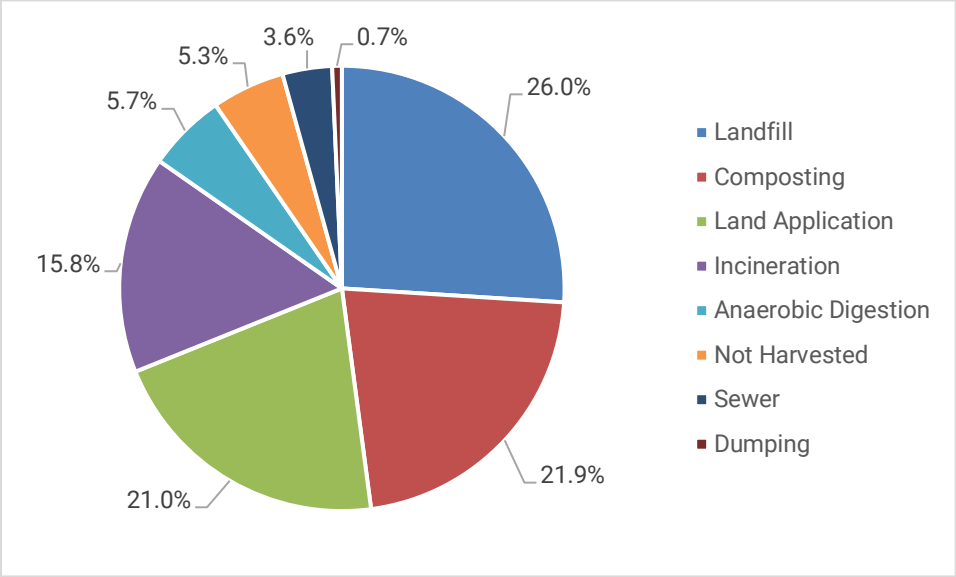
Source: ReFED, Inc. Food Waste Monitor

Prepared by: MLM4
Checked by: NOK

The scale of food waste generated by the non-residential sector demonstrates the potential; the challenge is identifying what portion is available and viable for R&E. Existing material management practices, established outlets, transportation distance, contamination, processing requirements, costs, and generator interest all influence whether identified tonnage represents a viable opportunity.

Generation alone does not indicate readily available SSO tons. ReFED estimates that Minnesota food waste is currently managed through a range of destinations, including landfill (26.0%), composting (21.9%), land application (21.0%), incineration (15.8%), anaerobic digestion (5.7%), sewer (3.6%), and other pathways, as highlighted on Figure 2-1.

Figure 2-1
End Destinations of Food Waste in Minnesota, 2024



These existing material flows significantly narrow the portion of Minnesota food waste that may represent viable opportunities for R&E. Material already managed through composting, anaerobic digestion, land application, and other beneficial uses may have established collection systems, contractual relationships, or economic value that make redirection to the AD Facility less practical, desirable, or cost effective. Conversely, food waste currently disposed of through landfill or incineration may represent a stronger opportunity for diversion, provided the material meets facility requirements and can be collected and transported economically.

2.2 Regional Organics Management Facilities and Outlets

Minnesota and the surrounding region have an established network of facilities and outlets managing SSO and other organic materials. Identified outlets include composting facilities, anaerobic digesters, food-to-livestock operations, and other beneficial uses, several of which also have depackaging capabilities. These outlets influence how organic materials currently move throughout the region and the availability of SSO for new or expanded processing capacity.

Understanding the existing organics management landscape is critical to evaluating R&E's development opportunity for additional SSO diversion programs. Some potential sources of SSO are already committed to established outlets, while differences in processing capabilities, capacity, material acceptance requirements, economics, and geography influence where SSO can practically be managed. At the same time, limitations within the existing system may create opportunities for additional processing capacity, partnerships, or alternative outlets.

Table 2-3 summarizes the regional organics management facilities and outlets identified during Foth's assessment. The implications of this existing network for R&E's organics diversion program strategy are evaluated further in the Findings section.

Table 2-3
Regional Organics Management Facilities and Outlets

Facility/Outlet	County	SSO Management Approach
Barthold Inc. (Barthold Farms)	Isanti (MN)	Food to Livestock (Food to Hogs)
Dakota Waste Solutions, LLC[1]	Dakota (MN)	Composting Facility (in development), Depackager (in development)
Hometown BioEnergy	Le Sueur (MN)	Anaerobic Digestor
Innovative Waste Recycling (IWR)	Le Sueur (MN)	Depackager, Food to Livestock (Food to Livestock Feed)
Malecha Dairy Farm	Pope (MN)	Anaerobic Digestor
Northland Drying	Sibley (MN)	Food to Livestock (Pet Food Ingredient Manufacturer)
ReConserve	Dakota (MN)	Food to Livestock (Food to Livestock Feed)
SMSC Organics Recycling Facility (Dakota Prairie Composting)	Scott (MN)	Composting Facility, Depackager
Tri-County Organics	Stearns (MN)	Composting Facility
Vanguard Renewables	Pierce (WI)	Anaerobic Digestor, Depackager
Vanguard Renewables–E-Z Recycling	Ramsey (MN)	Depackager, Material Recovery Facility
Veit Disposal–Vonco II	Sherburne (MN)	Composting Facility, Depackager
Viresco	Barron (WI)	Anaerobic Digestor, Depackager
WM–Specialized Environmental Technologies, Inc. (SET) – Empire Township	Dakota (MN)	Composting Facility, Depackager (in progress)
WM–SET – Shakopee	Scott (MN)	Composting Facility

[1] Dakota Waste Solutions, LLC submitted an application in July 2025 for a SSOM compost facility to compost SSOM, yard waste, and clean wood. Plans to have a depackager. Annual permitted capacities for the site include 72,000 tons of SSOM and 13,500 tons of yard waste.

Prepared by: MLM4
Checked by: NOK

3. Methodology

Foth used a phased approach to identify, screen, prioritize, and advance potential non-residential SSO diversion opportunities. The assessment initially focused on potential opportunities within Ramsey and Washington Counties and the broader metro area, while expanding into greater Minnesota and surrounding areas where potential opportunities warranted further evaluation.

Potential SSO generators were identified through multiple data sources, including R&E and BizRecycling records, county SCORE reporting contacts, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's (MPCA) facility reporting data, prior organics studies, ReFED food waste data, North American Industry Classification System-based business research, and Foth's clients, industry and agency relationships. Together, these sources provided insight into where food waste is generated, how much may be generated, and where material currently moves within the regional organics management system.

Foth consolidated identified sources into a centralized tracking database that documented potential generators, estimated tonnages, location, existing material management practices, engagement status, and other information relevant to organics diversion potential. As of July 2026, the database included more than 1,300 potential non-residential SSO sources and was maintained as a living resource throughout the assessment.

Available data was used to prioritize sectors and generators with the greatest potential to provide meaningful and reliable quantities of acceptable SSO. Potential tonnage alone was not considered an indicator of availability. Foth also evaluated existing material destinations, transportation and processing requirements, material characteristics, and the potential economic value of SSO to determine which sources warranted further investigation.

The assessment also evaluated the regional organics management landscape, including composting facilities, anaerobic digesters, food-to-livestock operations, manufacturers utilizing food residuals, and other beneficial-use outlets. Foth considered how existing processing capabilities, capacity constraints, material acceptance requirements, established material flows, and market value influence the availability of SSO to R&E.

To advance identified opportunities, Foth developed a standardized survey for non-residential generators to validate and supplement information gathered through the initial assessment. The survey was designed to collect generator-specific information on SSO quantities, current management practices and destinations, transportation arrangements, contamination and material characteristics, barriers to diversion, economic insights, and interest in potential partnership with R&E. Survey outreach was tailored to both entities within existing R&E and BizRecycling networks and newly identified generators, with initial surveys distributed during the assessment.

Survey responses and targeted stakeholder engagement were used to further evaluate whether identified tonnage represents an available, suitable, and practical SSO diversion opportunity for R&E. Findings from this process informed the opportunities, implementation strategies, and recommendations presented in this report.

Figure 3-1 provides a visual representation of this assessment's methodology.

Figure 3-1
Strategic SSO Diversion Funnel



4. Findings

This assessment confirmed that significant quantities of SSO are generated throughout the region, but food waste generation alone does not define R&E's opportunity to divert SSO to its partnership facilities. Much of the material identified already has established organics management systems, has economic value, or is constrained by transportation, processing requirements, contamination, collection infrastructure, and generator-specific needs.

The opportunity for R&E is the subset of SSO that is available, suitable, reliable, and practical to secure. Foth's research and generator engagement identified opportunities across multiple sectors but also demonstrated that no single generator type or material stream is likely to provide a simple pathway to fulfilling R&E's goals and commitments. The strongest opportunities are those where R&E can provide a meaningful operational or economic advantage, create new diversion opportunities, assist another public agency with achieving its diversion goals, or fill a gap within the existing regional organics management system.

4.1 Metro Area SSO Opportunity

Foth's assessment identified existing residential and commercial SSO collection throughout the seven-county metro area as an important component of the regional feedstock landscape. Although Foth initially focused on non-residential generators, county reporting data demonstrated that significant quantities of SSO are already being collected and recycled through residential drop-off programs and commercial collection systems. Table 4-1 summarizes the residential and commercial SSO tonnages reported in 2024 by each metro area county to the MPCA that were recycled via composting or anaerobic digestion.

Table 4-1
Metro Area Reported Recycled SSO Tonnages, 2024

Metro County	Residential SSO (tons)	Commercial SSO (tons)	Combined SSO (tons)
Anoka	3,510	3,811	7,321
Carver	158	1,204	1,362
Dakota	0	31,670	31,670
Hennepin	11,989	14,125	26,114
Ramsey	392	4,956	5,348
Scott	0	4,873	4,873
Washington	260	3,493	3,753
Total	**16,309**	**64,132**	**80,441**

Source: Ramsey County's 2024 SCORE Report, Materials Collected for Recycling submission category

Prepared by: MLM4
Checked by: NOK

Within Ramsey and Washington Counties, existing residential programs accounted for approximately 652 tons of SSO, while reported commercial SSO totaled approximately 8,449 tons in 2024. These programs are particularly relevant because they represent established collection activity within R&E's two member counties. Substantial residential and commercial SSO tonnage is already being collected elsewhere throughout the metro area, especially in Dakota and Hennepin Counties. Both counties reported more combined annual SSO tonnages than R&E's 15,500-ton per year additional feedstock requirement; Dakota County reported 31,670 tons in 2024 and Hennepin County reported 26,114 tons.

Collectively, these reported tonnages demonstrate the scale of SSO already being managed with established collection systems in the metro area, while providing an important starting point for identifying material that may warrant further evaluation as potential diversion opportunities for R&E. Existing processing destinations, hauling arrangements, program ownership, economics, transportation distance, contractual relationships, and local government objectives influence whether these materials represent viable opportunities.

Comparison of reported SSO tonnages with estimated food waste generation further demonstrates the scale of the metro-area opportunity. As shown in Table 4-2, the seven metro counties reported approximately 80,400 tons of combined SSO in 2024, compared with approximately 582,700 tons of food waste estimated by ReFED. The resulting difference of approximately 502,300 tons illustrates that only about 16% of ReFED-estimated food waste generation across the seven metro counties is represented in reported SSO tonnage recycled.

Table 4-2
Metro Area Reported Recycled vs. Potential SSO Tonnages, 2024

Metro County	Reported Combined Recycled SSO (tons)	ReFED Estimated Food Waste[1] (tons)	Difference in Estimated Food Waste and Reported Recycled SSO (tons)
Anoka	7,321	68,640	61,319
Carver	1,362	20,515	19,153
Dakota	31,670	82,541	50,871
Hennepin	26,114	231,933	205,819
Ramsey	5,348	98,726	93,378
Scott	4,873	28,634	23,761
Washington	3,753	51,722	47,969
Total	**80,441**	**582,711**	**502,270**

[1] Calculated by multiplying the county population by Minnesota's statewide food waste generation rate of 0.1810 tons per person based on ReFED's estimated 1,055,200 statewide tons divided by Minnesota's 2024 population of 5,830,405 provided by the American Community Survey.

Prepared by: MLM4
Checked by: NOK

The estimated tonnage not currently being reported as SSO recycled should not be interpreted as readily available SSO for R&E. The difference includes food waste that may be disposed of, managed through pathways not captured in reported SSO data, unsuitable for the AD Facility, or impractical to recover due to collection, transportation, contamination, economics, or other constraints. Rather, the comparison identifies the scale and geographic concentration of food waste that warrants further evaluation for additional diversion potential.

For R&E, the opportunity is to narrow this gap with the portion of SSO that is available, suitable, and practical to secure. Continued coordination with metro counties and targeted engagement with non-residential generators can help identify where additional diversion can support both regional organics recovery and R&E's contractual needs.

4.2 Existing Regional Organics Processing Capacity and Material Flows

R&E has entered an established regional market for non-residential SSO. In Section 2.2, Foth identified multiple organics management facilities and outlets throughout the metro area, greater Minnesota, and western Wisconsin, including composting facilities, anaerobic digesters, food to livestock operations, and other beneficial uses. Several facilities also offer, or are developing, depackaging capabilities that expand the types of organic materials they can accept.

Publicly reported 2025 facility data to the MPCA further demonstrates the scale of SSO already moving through the regional organics management system. As shown in Table 4-3, the identified facilities and outlets that reported data to the MPCA in 2025 managed approximately 60,700 tons of SSO through composting, transfer, and other management activities. The reported tonnage is nearly four times R&E's 15,500-ton additional feedstock requirement; however, these tons represent existing material flows and competing for these tons is not currently advantageous as other SSO tons may be more economically viable.

The transfer of SSO between facilities also demonstrates that regional material flows are not static. Material may move beyond the facility where it is initially received based on processing capabilities, capacity, or other operational considerations, creating potential opportunities for coordination within the regional organics management system.

Table 4-3
Regional Organics Management Facilities and Outlets Reported SSO Tonnages, 2025

Facility/Outlet	SSO (tons)	SSO Management Approach	SSO Destination
SMSC Organics Recycling Facility	6,680	Composted	Dakota Prairie Composting
	261	Stored Onsite	Dakota Prairie Composting
	13,189	Composted	On site
	937	Transferred*	Dem-Con Landfill LLC
Vanguard Renewables–	3,307	Transferred*	Hometown BioEnergy

Table 4-3 continued

Facility/Outlet	SSO (tons)	SSO Management Approach	SSO Destination
E-Z Recycling	1,798	Transferred*	Innovative Waste Recycling
	6,624	Transferred*	Viresco
Veit Disposal–Vonco II	1,659	Composted	On site
WM–SET – Empire Township	26,240	Composted	On site
Total	**60,695**		

* Sent to a facility or outlet for secondary processing.

Prepared by: MLM4
Checked by: NOK

The availability of these established outlets reduces the portion of generated SSO that is realistically available for R&E to manage or facilitate diversion. Many large non-residential generators already have collection systems, hauling arrangements, processing outlets, and associated pricing in place. As a result, securing additional SSO will require R&E to offer a compelling alternative based on factors such as cost, transportation, material acceptance, reliability, processing capabilities, and ease of participation, rather than relying solely on the availability of food waste within the region.

This assessment also identified an important distinction among potential sources of SSO. Material currently disposed of through landfill or waste-to-energy represents a different opportunity than material already directed to organics processing or another beneficial use. Pursuing material that is not currently diverted provides R&E an opportunity to increase regional organics recovery while supporting its objectives. Material already beneficially managed may be less practical to pursue unless an existing outlet cannot accommodate the material or R&E can provide a more suitable management option.

Existing organics outlets may also represent potential partners. Processing capacity constraints, material acceptance limitations, depackaging needs, seasonal conditions, or other operational factors may create opportunities for R&E and regional facilities to coordinate on materials that cannot be effectively managed through existing outlets.

The regional landscape therefore represents both a constraint and an opportunity for R&E. Securing the additional contractual tons will require a targeted strategy focused on SSO that is not only generated, but available, suitable, economically viable, and practical to redirect or newly divert.

4.3 SSO Value Varies Across the Regional Market

Foth identified significant variation in the cost and value of managing SSO across the regional market. Organics management fees by regional facilities (e.g., composting, food to livestock, anaerobic digestion) ranged from approximately $30 to $122 per ton with R&E's minimum SSO processing fee at the top of this range as established in the Second Amendment with Dem-Con.

Regional entities that indicated offering depackaging services provided a range in pricing of approximately $60 to $80 per ton, which for one entity included processing the packaged food waste and recycling and disposing of the separated SSO and packaging materials, respectively.

Disposal economics differ considerably for SSO currently managed as MSW. Reported regional landfill gate rate disposal fees ranged from approximately $142 to $290 per ton. Published gate rates should be considered market benchmarks rather than representative costs for all generators, as contracted customers typically receive reduced negotiated pricing based on volume, service arrangements, or other factors. These differences demonstrate that the economics of an R&E feedstock opportunity depend heavily on where and how a generator's material is currently managed.

Foth also identified that certain clean, consistent food scraps from manufacturing entities can carry positive market value, with some beneficial-use outlets paying generators for qualifying material. For these generators, SSO functions more like a commodity than a waste stream. Foth identified two regional outlets during this assessment that purchase suitable SSO from food manufacturers, one being a pet food ingredient manufacturer in Sibley County and the other an anaerobic digestor in Le Sueur County.

This creates a fundamentally different market condition than SSO currently managed at a cost. Generators receiving payment for clean SSO already have a financial incentive to maintain their existing management arrangement. These tons may therefore be less available to R&E, even when the material is compatible with anaerobic digestion and generated in significant quantities. Conversely, packaged, contaminated, or mixed food waste may require depackaging or other processing and carry an additional management cost.

As a result, tonnage alone is not an indicator of SSO availability or attractiveness. A generator currently paying a high disposal cost may have a stronger economic incentive to consider an alternative management pathway, while material already moving to a lower-cost organics outlet or receiving positive market value may be significantly more difficult for R&E to secure. Transportation, processing requirements, material quality, and existing contractual relationships further influence the competitiveness of each opportunity.

4.4 Potential SSO Opportunities by Generator Sector

Foth's assessment identified SSO diversion opportunities across a diverse range of non-residential sectors. Each sector presents different opportunities and constraints related to tonnage, material quality, existing management practices, economics, logistics, and feedstock reliability. The following subsections summarize the key findings from Foth's research and direct engagement with potential SSO generators. Table 4-4 presents key takeaways from each sector summary. Generator sectors are organized based on the relative practicality, scale, consistency, and potential availability of SSO identified through Foth's assessment. The order generally progresses from more attainable and reliable SSO diversion opportunities to sources with established outlets or more variable and unpredictable generation.

Collectively, these sectors demonstrate that R&E's organics diversion strategy will require a portfolio of opportunities rather than reliance on a single generator type. Recurring institutional, commercial, and manufacturing sources can provide baseline SSO sources, while event-driven, seasonal, and other intermittent sources can provide supplemental tonnage.

Table 4-4
Summary of Key Takeaways from Identified Industry Sectors

Sector	Key Takeaway
County and Local Municipality Owned Facilities	R&E should look first within its own partnership network. Existing county organics programs offer an attainable opportunity to align publicly generated SSO with R&E's broader organics strategy.
Food Rescues and Pantries	Food recovery should remain the priority. R&E's opportunity is the residual material that cannot be redistributed and would otherwise be disposed.
Correctional Facilities	Correctional facilities offer concentrated and relatively predictable SSO volumes, but actual generation and existing program economics must be validated before tons can be considered a viable R&E feedstock opportunity.
Healthcare Facilities	Healthcare systems offer recurring SSO volumes across multiple facilities, but material quality and existing management pathways will determine which tons represent viable feedstock for R&E.
Airport Facilities	Large airport facilities may contain multiple SSO diversion opportunities under one roof. Established organics programs and independently managed food service operations should be evaluated separately.
Public and Private K-12 Schools	School districts can aggregate relatively modest volumes from individual facilities into meaningful system-wide SSO diversion opportunities, particularly when multiple organic material streams are considered together.
Public and Private University and College Campuses	For established organics programs, R&E may compete on logistics as much as price. A closer destination can materially change the economics of an existing SSO program.
Human and Animal Food Manufacturers	Food manufacturing offers significant tonnage, but the highest volume and cleanest residuals often already have value. R&E's opportunity may lie in the material that existing markets cannot consistently manage.
Grocery Stores and Wholesalers	Grocery and wholesale operations offer significant, consistent SSO volumes, but much of the cleanest material already has an established beneficial use. The strongest opportunities for R&E are likely to be where existing organics management arrangements leave an operational, capacity, logistical, or economic need.
Logistics and Freight Entities	Freight-related SSO is difficult to predict, but individual loads can be significant. R&E could create value by providing a responsive outlet for suitable food products that might otherwise be disposed.
Arenas and Event Venues	Arenas and event venues can generate concentrated SSO volumes, but maintaining material quality requires active management. For R&E, the strongest opportunities may be where existing programs need a more reliable or flexible management solution.
Large Public Events	Public events can concentrate significant SSO generation into a short timeframe, but clean SSO requires active oversight. Back-of-house collection offers the strongest opportunity to balance tonnage with material quality.

4.4.1 County and Local Municipality Owned Facilities

County and municipal facilities represent a practical opportunity to expand SSO diversion within R&E's existing partnership network. Foth identified established organics collection programs at publicly owned facilities in both Ramsey and Washington Counties; however, collected material is not currently directed to an R&E partnership outlet.

These existing programs provide an opportunity to redirect established SSO streams while also evaluating expansion to additional public facilities. Unlike generators that would need to establish new source-separation programs, participating county and local municipality owned facilities already have experience with organics collection, reducing some of the operational barriers associated with developing new sources of viable SSO.

The opportunity extends beyond existing programs. R&E can work directly with its partner counties to identify additional state, county and municipal facilities where SSO collection is practical, particularly facilities with cafeterias, kitchens, correctional food service, public gathering spaces, or other operations that consistently generate food waste.

Although individual facilities may generate relatively modest quantities, public facilities offer R&E a high degree of influence, an opportunity to lead by example and consistent agency diversion goals. Coordinated expansion across multiple facilities could aggregate additional baseline feedstock while demonstrating the organics diversion practices R&E is seeking to advance throughout the region.

4.4.2 Food Rescue and Pantry Residuals

Food rescue organizations and food pantries represent a targeted source of SSO generated after edible food recovery opportunities have been exhausted. Foth identified organizations that recover substantial quantities of food for redistribution but still generate residual food that is spoiled, damaged, expired, or otherwise unsuitable for donation.

The remaining SSO is generally smaller in volume but can lack a complete organics management pathway. One organization reported approximately 500 to 1,000 pounds per week of recovered food that could not be redistributed. While a portion is collected through an existing organics program, limited collection capacity results in approximately 300 to 400 pounds per week of additional organics being disposed of as MSW. Assuming the organization operates 52 weeks per year, the additional organics being landfilled equate to approximately 7.8 to 10.4 tons per year. Other food pantries have established weekly organics collection service but incur recurring costs to manage the material.

Collection and transportation emerged as the primary barriers to capturing additional SSO from this sector. Food rescue organizations may lack sufficient containers, hauling capacity, staff resources, or storage space to independently manage all residual organics. Securing these tons could therefore require R&E or its partners to provide collection infrastructure or coordinate hauling, making individual small generators less efficient to pursue on their own.

Food rescues and pantries are best considered as aggregated or partnership-based feedstock opportunities rather than significant standalone sources. Coordination with counties, municipalities, haulers, or existing organics programs could help consolidate residual material from multiple organizations while maintaining food donation as the preferred management pathway.

4.4.3 Correctional Facilities

Correctional facilities represent a concentrated and consistent source of SSO generated through centralized food preparation and dining operations. Foth identified multiple state correctional facilities with established organics collection programs, primarily managing back-of-house food scraps through food to livestock programs, with other facilities using bulk organics collection systems.

Initial program records indicated that participating facilities collectively manage substantial quantities of SSO annually. However, tonnage reported for food to livestock programs was based largely on assumed weights for individual collection containers. Foth therefore conducted on-site weighing studies to validate actual container weights and develop a more reliable estimate of SSO generated by these facilities. The results provide a stronger basis for evaluating available tonnage and comparing the economics of existing management practices with the AD Facility. During the on-site studies, Foth also learned that the current organics management program does not accept post-consumer organic waste (e.g., food waste from meals served), which may represent a significant opportunity for additional organic materials and assist the State Correctional facility to achieve their diversion goals.

The assessment also demonstrated that correctional facilities offer several characteristics favorable to SSO diversion program development. Food waste is generated through centralized kitchens, source separation practices are already established at several locations, and institutional food service provides relatively consistent generation compared with more variable commercial sources. These characteristics may reduce some of the operational barriers associated with establishing a new SSO program.

At the same time, much of the identified material already has an established beneficial-use outlet. The viability of these tons for R&E will therefore depend on the actual quantity generated, existing collection costs, transportation logistics, material quality, and whether R&E can provide a practical and economically competitive management option. Changes in facility populations and operations can also materially affect future SSO generation and should be considered when projecting long-term feedstock availability.

4.4.4 Healthcare Facilities

Healthcare facilities represent a consistent source of SSO generated through kitchens, cafeterias, food service operations, and patient dining. Foth's engagement with a regional healthcare system identified established back-of-house organics collection at multiple facilities, including two locations that collectively managed approximately 160 tons of food scraps in 2025 through a food to livestock program. Additional organics collection programs were identified at other healthcare and administrative facilities throughout the region.

The assessment found that viable SSO availability can vary significantly across facilities within the same healthcare system. Some locations have established beneficial-use outlets, while others are collecting both pre- and post-consumer organics but experiencing contamination challenges. Post-consumer collection presents challenges because material is less controlled and may contain non-organic contaminants that affect its suitability for processing.

Healthcare systems therefore present an opportunity that extends beyond individual facilities. Their multiple locations, centralized sustainability initiatives, and recurring food service operations may allow R&E to evaluate SSO opportunities at a system level while accounting for

differences in existing outlets, material quality, contamination, collection practices, and geographic location. Facilities experiencing contamination or limitations with existing collection programs may also benefit from targeted technical assistance before their material represents a reliable feedstock source.

4.4.5 Airport Facilities

Airport facilities represent a concentrated source of non-residential SSO generated through concessions, food service, catering, and other tenant operations. Foth's engagement identified an established airport SSO collection program currently diverting approximately 530 tons per year from back-of-house operations to composting. The program demonstrates that large, multi-tenant facilities can successfully consolidate SSO from numerous generators into a single, established collection system.

The assessment also identified additional food waste streams generated by independently operated airline catering services that are managed separately from the airport-wide SSO program. These operations may generate significant and consistent quantities of food residuals and represent a distinct opportunity for further evaluation.

The airport subsector demonstrates two potential pathways for R&E: evaluating whether an established collection program could benefit from an alternative processing destination, and pursuing food service or catering operations whose material is managed independently and may present new diversion opportunities.

4.4.6 Public and Private K-12 Schools

K-12 schools represent an established and scalable source of institutional SSO generated through cafeterias, kitchens, and centralized food preparation operations. Foth identified a large public school system with district-wide SSO collection serving more than 50 locations. The program reported approximately 4,464 cubic yards of SSO in 2025, equivalent to an estimated 300 tons annually using an available K-12 school conversion factor.

Centralized nutrition operations may present an additional and distinct viable SSO diversion opportunity. In addition to SSO collected throughout individual schools, the identified district operates a centralized nutrition facility producing more than 6.5 million meals annually. The facility generates packaged food requiring depackaging and other materials that could include liquid organics and fats, oils, and grease. These materials broaden the potential opportunity beyond traditional cafeteria food scraps and highlight the value of processing capabilities that can accommodate multiple organic material streams.

The assessment also found that school districts may periodically procure collection and processing services through centralized contracts, creating defined opportunities for R&E to evaluate participation when existing service arrangements are reconsidered.

4.4.7 Public and Private University and College Campuses

University and college campuses represent concentrated sources of SSO generated through dining, residential, academic, and other campus operations. Foth's engagement identified a large university campus generating approximately 100 tons of SSO per month, or approximately 1,200 tons annually, through an established collection program that includes food waste and other accepted organic materials.

Transportation emerged as a significant consideration in evaluating this opportunity. The campus currently transports collected organics approximately four times per week to an established composting outlet, requiring a roundtrip of approximately 64 miles. A potential delivery point within R&E's regional processing network would reduce the roundtrip to approximately 11 miles, significantly reducing hauling distance and associated transportation and labor costs.

The existing program also demonstrates the importance of evaluating total system cost rather than processing fees alone. Although the campus currently benefits from a relatively low organics processing fee, transportation requires approximately two hours per trip at a contracted hauling rate of $73 per hour. A closer destination could therefore provide operational and transportation efficiencies that partially offset differences in processing costs.

Large university and college campuses may represent viable feedstock opportunities where R&E's infrastructure can provide a logistical advantage over existing organics outlets. For established diversion programs, proximity, transportation efficiency, material acceptance, service reliability, and total management cost may ultimately be as important as the processing fee when evaluating alternative destinations.

4.4.8 Human and Animal Food Manufacturers

Food manufacturers represent some of the largest concentrated sources of organic residuals identified through Foth's assessment. Individual facilities can generate thousands of tons annually through production residuals, off-specification products, ingredients, packaged products, and other organic byproducts. However, Foth found that much of this material is already managed through well-established beneficial-use markets.

Clean, consistent manufacturing residuals can have positive market value. Foth identified manufacturers sending large quantities of suitable food residuals to animal feed and ingredient markets, with some generators receiving payment for qualifying material. Other manufacturers have developed internal solutions, including land application, wastewater treatment, and on-site anaerobic digestion. These existing pathways can make high-volume manufacturing residuals among the least attainable feedstock opportunities, despite their desirable material characteristics and significant tonnage.

The assessment also demonstrated that markets for manufacturing residuals are dynamic. Materials may shift between animal feed, anaerobic digestion, land application, disposal, and other outlets as pricing, processing capacity, material specifications, or operational needs change. These movements provided important insight into the broader regional organics management landscape and demonstrate that established material flows are not necessarily permanent, which may present an opportunity for a dedicated staff person at R&E to establish a relationship with these facilities so when organics become available, R&E is positioned to receive and divert the organics to its partner AD Facility.

The strongest opportunities for R&E may be the residual streams that fall outside these established markets. Foth identified manufacturers with secondary or intermittent residuals, including off-specification products, dry ingredients, packaged food, and other materials that existing outlets cannot consistently accept. These streams may be smaller than primary production residuals but can present a more realistic opportunity where AD processing capabilities provide a needed management solution.

4.4.9 Grocery Stores and Wholesalers

Grocery stores and food wholesalers represent potentially significant sources of consistent SSO generated through produce, prepared foods, bakery, deli, and other food handling operations. Foth's outreach found that many grocery and wholesale organizations already have established organics diversion programs and longstanding relationships with existing organics management outlets.

Material quality also influences where these organics currently are managed. Edible products may first be directed to food donation, while other clean food residuals may be managed through food to livestock or other beneficial-use programs. Other grocery and wholesale SSO are directed to composting facilities. These established pathways demonstrate that much of the sector's food waste is already managed through the organics recovery system rather than disposed of in landfills.

Despite these established relationships, grocery and wholesale entities remain a significant feedstock opportunity because of the volume of SSO generated across individual locations and multi-site operations. SSO that are currently delivered to composting facilities warrants further evaluation where R&E could provide a competitive alternative based on transportation distance, processing capabilities, service reliability, capacity, or total management cost. In particular, data provided by the MPCA for Cub Foods locations throughout the metro counties indicated that more than 11,600 tons were sent to unnamed composting facilities in 2024.

However, large tonnages do not necessarily translate into readily available SSO. Longstanding service relationships, corporate contracts, existing beneficial uses, transportation arrangements, and favorable economics may make some grocery and wholesale SSO difficult for R&E to secure. Opportunities should therefore be evaluated based on several factors including but not limited to the quantity and quality of material generated and R&E's ability to provide a compelling alternative to the generator's existing management pathway.

4.4.10 Logistics and Freight Entities

Logistics and freight entities represent a unique source of potentially significant, but unpredictable, SSO volumes. Food products may require disposition when trailers or shipments are damaged, rejected, compromised, or otherwise unable to reach their intended destination. These loads can include both packaged and unpackaged food products and may generate substantial quantities of organic material at one time.

Foth's engagement found that management practices for these materials vary across the freight industry. Some logistics providers have established sustainability practices that prioritize reuse, organics recycling, or other beneficial-use outlets before disposal. Other providers may rely on landfilling when an alternative outlet cannot be identified quickly, or the logistics associated with recovery are too complex.

This variability represents an opportunity for R&E. Unlike generators with recurring SSO and long-established management arrangements, freight companies may need a responsive outlet capable of accepting unplanned loads on short notice. The AD Facility's ability to accept suitable food products, particularly packaged material requiring depackaging, could provide an alternative to disposal when reuse or other beneficial-use options are unavailable; however, freight-related SSO should be viewed as a supplemental rather than baseline feedstock source because volumes are event-driven and difficult to forecast. Material acceptance, contamination,

depackaging needs, transportation distance, response time, and the condition of individual loads will determine whether these opportunities are viable for R&E.

4.4.11 Arenas and Event Venues

Arenas and event venues represent highly concentrated but variable sources of SSO generated through concessions, food service, suites, and special events. Foth's engagement identified established organics programs at major metro-area venues that collect both pre- and post-consumer food waste as part of broader waste diversion systems. One venue reported collecting approximately 7.8 tons of SSO during a single month, demonstrating that significant quantities can be generated during periods of active event programming.

Several venues identified in this assessment have already invested substantially in the infrastructure and practices needed to support effective organics diversion. Identified programs include multi-stream collection stations, dedicated SSO containers and compactors, compostable food service ware, centralized material sorting, and staff assigned specifically to contamination control during events. Grant funding and technical assistance through BizRecycling and other programs have also helped venues establish and improve these systems.

Contamination remains a significant operational challenge despite this investment. High visitor turnover, large crowds, concession operations, and reliance on public-facing collection systems increase the potential for contamination. At one venue, contamination has resulted in rejected SSO loads, while another uses dedicated staff to inspect and sort materials during events before consolidation. These findings demonstrate that collection infrastructure alone does not ensure a reliable feedstock stream; active management and contamination controls are critical.

Much of the SSO identified at these venues is already separately collected and delivered to established organics processing outlets; however, arenas and event venues demonstrate that large quantities of SSO can be successfully consolidated at individual sites, and facilities experiencing contamination, processing, cost, or service challenges may warrant further evaluation as potential feedstock opportunities.

4.4.12 Large Public Events

Large public events and farmers' markets represent concentrated but highly variable sources of SSO generated by food vendors, exhibitors, and event operations. Foth identified opportunities at major regional public events involving hundreds of food vendors, where significant quantities of food scraps may be generated within a relatively short operating period.

Back-of-house collection represents the strongest opportunity for recovering clean SSO from public events. Limiting collection to food preparation areas provides greater control over the material stream and reduces the contamination risk associated with public-facing receptacles. Opportunities may also exist to improve recovery of packaged food through depackaging and other processing capabilities.

Foth's assessment found that contamination and program oversight are significant barriers to expanding SSO collection at public events. Conversations regarding farmers' markets similarly identified concerns with maintaining clean material streams across numerous vendors and temporary collection areas. Effective programs may require dedicated staff or volunteers,

vendor education, clearly defined accepted materials, strategically located collection points, and active monitoring throughout the event.

Public events therefore represent a targeted rather than baseline feedstock opportunity for R&E. Large events may provide meaningful quantities of SSO during short periods, but the staffing, collection, transportation, contamination control, and processing needs must be considered against the quantity and quality of material recovered.

4.5 Barriers and Opportunities for Non-Residential SSO Diversion

As discussed in Section 3, Foth developed and distributed two standardized surveys for non-residential generators: one within existing R&E and BizRecycling networks, the other for entities outside of these existing networks. This section reviews high-level takeaways that prevent non-residential generators from separating SSO, and what resources non-residential generators need to begin separating and bringing SSO to Dem-Con's AD Facility or to R&E's partnership transfer stations.

Survey responses indicate that the primary barriers to expanding non-residential SSO diversion are practical rather than a lack of interest. Across respondents the following were found to influence whether generators can establish or expand SSO diversion programs:

- Cost
- Hauling availability and collection logistics
- Access to processing outlets
- Staffing and equipment
- Contamination

4.5.1 Survey Findings Within R&E and BizRecycling Network

Foth surveyed entities that received a BizRecycling Recycling Grant since 2014 to understand current organics management practices and barriers to expanded SSO diversion. While prior grant participation does not indicate that an entity currently separates organics, this network represents an established group of businesses and organizations throughout Ramsey and Washington Counties that have previously engaged with R&E on waste reduction or recycling initiatives. This survey was also distributed to entities located in Ramsey and Washington Counties that were identified as viable SSO generators during this assessment

A broad trend among BizRecycling network respondents is that many already separate some organics, generally through manual collection and, less frequently, customer-facing collection. However, several respondents were unsure where their collected organics ultimately went, and many did not receive weight or volume data from their hauler, indicating gaps in transparency and performance tracking.

Among respondents that indicated not currently separating organics, the main barriers are practical rather than a lack of interest. Respondents pointed to the cost of alternative disposal services, limited nearby processing options, insufficient hauling choices, and the logistical difficulty of moving material to an appropriate destination. The data also suggested that some respondents produce relatively small or specialized organic waste streams, such as coffee-processing residuals, which make a separate collection service difficult to justify without a convenient outlet.

These respondents indicated they would be more likely to begin separating SSO if the service were affordable, convenient, and supported by reliable transportation. Frequently identified motivations included lower service costs, grants or other financial incentives, additional hauling providers, processing locations closer to the respondent, staffing support, and equipment upgrades. Environmental benefits also motivate some respondents, but the survey indicates that those benefits are most likely to drive action when paired with an operationally workable and financially competitive collection system.

Overall survey responses show that needs vary substantially by non-residential generator. Some entities are seeking ways to begin or expand diversion, while others believe their current program is sufficient, or generate too little SSO to support paying for additional services. Overall, targeted assistance involving cost, hauling access, staff capacity, equipment, and clearer reporting may be more effective than a single uniform approach for non-residential generators.

4.5.2 Survey Findings for Entities Outside of Ramsey and Washington Counties

Foth also distributed a separate survey tailored to entities located outside of Ramsey and Washington Counties that were identified as viable SSO generators during this assessment. The intention of this survey was to understand generators' current organics diversion and collection programs, existing destinations of SSO (e.g., regional organics management facilities and outlets), and identify available or potentially recoverable SSO.

Among this survey's respondents that already separate SSO, responses indicate that the primary challenges to maintaining or expanding SSO are financial and operational. Respondents identified costs related to hauling, containers and compostable bags, processing equipment, and contamination, along with challenges involving transportation services, staffing, access to nearby end markets, and visibility into where collected organics are ultimately processed.

Respondents indicated that financial incentives or reduced operating costs would be an important factor in changing current organics management practices. Other motivating factors included improved hauling services, environmental benefits, equipment upgrades, staffing support, and greater access to nearby end markets. Overall, the results suggest that improving the affordability, convenience, and accessibility of SSO collection and processing could support increased participation and diversion to anaerobic digestion facilities.

Overall survey responses highlight differences in how non-residential generators manage and track their organics. Respondents reported a range of collection frequencies, quantities, and management approaches, while some had limited information about where their materials were ultimately processed or did not receive data on the quantity diverted. These findings suggest that organics management needs vary considerably among non-residential generators and that improved service options, access to processing outlets, and diversion reporting could help strengthen existing SSO programs and support future SSO expansion.

4.6 Depackaging Could Expand Opportunities for Viable SSO

Depackaging capability could expand the range of viable SSO available to R&E. Packaged and off-specification food products were identified throughout the assessment as potential feedstock, particularly from food manufacturers, wholesalers, institutional food service operations, and logistics entities. Without depackaging capability, these materials may require additional processing before they can be incorporated into an organics management system.

At R&E's request, Foth obtained preliminary equipment pricing for a depackaging system capable of processing approximately 15 tons per hour. The estimated equipment purchase price was approximately $750,000, excluding installation, site improvements, utilities, operations, maintenance, residual disposal, staffing, and other implementation costs.

The value of owning depackaging equipment will depend on the quantity of packaged SSO R&E can reliably secure. Greater throughput would distribute capital and operating costs across more tons and could reduce reliance on third-party depackaging services. Depackaging capacity could also strengthen R&E's value proposition to generators whose materials are difficult to manage through existing outlets.

Additional analysis is needed before determining whether equipment ownership is financially advantageous. A business-case evaluation should compare anticipated packaged-food tonnage and total lifecycle cost against third-party depackaging fees, avoided disposal costs, and the value of additional feedstock that could be secured.

5. Recommendations

The regional market contains sufficient food waste to support continued SSO diversion program development, but those tons will not secure themselves. Existing outlets, economics, transportation, material quality, and generator needs substantially narrow the amount of SSO that is realistically available to R&E.

Meeting county and R&E goals and commitments for organics diversion, including the 15,500-ton requirement, will require R&E to actively develop the market, remove barriers to diversion, and build a diversified portfolio of reliable sources of viable SSO. The following recommendations focus on converting identified opportunities into committed tons while creating new diversion, leveraging R&E's existing partnerships and infrastructure, and positioning R&E as a long-term organics management partner. Table 5-1 presents key takeaways from each recommendation. Recommendations are organized from market-building strategies to targeted SSO diversion program development actions. Priority is first placed on establishing the resources, policies, market conditions, and diversified portfolio needed to support long-term SSO procurement; followed by opportunities R&E can influence through existing and regional partnerships; and finally by targeted actions to validate, create, and secure specific SSO streams.

Table 5-1
Summary of Key Takeaways from Recommendations

Recommendation	Key Takeaway	Implementation Effort*
Dedicate Resources to SSO Procurement	Meeting required SSO tonnage targets will require sustained market engagement and dedicated ownership beyond the initial identification of SSO diversion opportunities.	Moderate
Support Statewide Organics Diversion Policy	Public policy can expand available SSO by creating new diversion, not simply shifting existing tons between established outlets.	High
Reduce Barriers to SSO Collection and Delivery	R&E can create feedstock by making organics diversion easier to access and more economical to use.	High
Build a Diversified SSO Generator Portfolio	The goal should not be to identify one source, but to build a resilient portfolio capable of reliably delivering targeted SSO quantities year after year.	Moderate
Look Within the R&E Partnership	R&E should first maximize the opportunities it can directly influence, then use the partnership's funding, programs, and policy tools to create new opportunities. Public investment in new organics diversion should, where practical, also support R&E's organics diversion strategy.	Low
Pursue Additional Metro County Partnership Opportunities	R&E should prioritize partnerships where substantial SSO infrastructure already exists, but significant additional diversion potential remains.	Moderate
Pilot High-Potential SSO Opportunities	Use pilots to prove the tons before contracting the tons.	Moderate
Expand the Food Scraps Pickup Program	R&E should leverage infrastructure already in place to create new tons, particularly from generators too small to support dedicated organics collection.	High
Target Underserved Manufacturing Residuals	R&E should focus where the market has a gap, not where clean organics already have value.	Moderate

*Low: Can largely advance through existing relationships, programs, or processes.
Moderate: Requires meaningful coordination, program development, or operational changes.
High: Requires sustained multi-party coordination, new capabilities, policy change, or significant implementation effort.

5.1 Dedicate Resources to SSO Procurement

R&E should establish a dedicated development position responsible for converting identified SSO diversion opportunities into committed tons. This individual would lead generator outreach and relationship development and support R&E leadership with pricing, negotiations, and contract development.

R&E should also dedicate resources to sustained marketing and outreach that supports this position, including updated AD Facility materials, targeted email campaigns, direct outreach to priority sectors and generators, and promotion through relevant industry associations. These efforts should build awareness of the AD Facility, communicate R&E's value proposition, and maintain a pipeline of prospective partners as commencement approaches.

The dedicated SSO feedstock development position should also monitor and pursue state, regional, and national funding opportunities that support organics collection, processing, transportation, infrastructure, and waste diversion. Grant funding should be strategically targeted to overcome barriers identified through generator engagement, including collection containers, depackaging or other equipment, hauling costs, facility improvements, and implementation of new or expanded SSO collection programs. R&E should also consider opportunities to pursue funding directly or partner with counties, municipalities, haulers, and generators on applications where shared investment could unlock additional SSO tonnages.

Grant funding should be treated as a development tool, not simply a funding opportunity. Priority should be given to funding that can create new diversion, reduce the cost of securing SSO tonnages, or improve the long-term reliability of material delivered through R&E's system.

Securing the substantial SSO tonnage needed to meet commitments and goals will require sustained market engagement and dedicated ownership beyond the initial identification of SSO generator opportunities.

5.2 Support Statewide Organics Diversion Policy

R&E should support and advocate for state policies that expand source separation and diversion of food waste and other organic materials from disposal. Statewide organics requirements for large generators, including food manufacturers, grocery stores, restaurants, hotels, healthcare facilities, educational institutions, event venues, and other commercial and public entities, could substantially increase the quantity of SSO entering Minnesota's organics management system.

Minnesota already requires certain commercial buildings in the seven-county metro to recycle at least three material types, with organics identified as one eligible material; however, organics separation itself is not universally required under that provision[3]. Expanding state policy to require large food waste generators to establish organics diversion programs could address one of the fundamental barriers identified through this assessment, which is that significant quantities of food waste are generated but are not yet captured through dedicated SSO collection systems.

[3] Minnesota Statutes §115A.151 Recycling Requirements; Public Entities; Commercial Buildings; Sports Facilities

R&E should work with its partner counties and other regional stakeholders to advocate for policies that create additional diversion while allowing generators to use appropriate organics management outlets. Policy considerations could include phased requirements based on generator size or food waste volume, reasonable access-to-processing provisions, implementation timelines, technical assistance, and grant or incentive funding to help generators establish collection infrastructure.

Expanded organics requirements would create a larger and more predictable market for SSO collection and processing. As new generators establish diversion programs, R&E could position the AD Facility and its partnership transfer stations as available management options, creating additional opportunities to secure SSO without relying solely on redirecting organics from existing beneficial uses.

5.3 Reduce Barriers to SSO Collection and Delivery

R&E should focus SSO diversion program development efforts on reducing the cost, transportation, and access barriers identified by non-residential generators. Survey responses indicate that interest in organics diversion exists, but participation is often constrained by hauling availability, transfer capacity, processing access, service costs, staffing, and collection logistics. Addressing these barriers could create new diversion opportunities while strengthening R&E's value proposition to generators.

R&E should explore partnerships with haulers to expand access to convenient SSO collection for residents and businesses. Partnerships could include coordinated collection routes, preferred or contracted hauling arrangements, aggregation of smaller generators, or incentives that make service financially viable in areas where dedicated organics collection is currently limited. Particular attention should be given to small and medium-sized generators that produce meaningful SSO collectively but may not generate enough material individually to support dedicated service.

R&E should also evaluate reduced or preferential tipping fees for qualifying SSO delivered through R&E partnership transfer stations. Strategic pricing could make these facilities more attractive aggregation points, reduce transportation barriers, and improve the economics of delivering material through R&E's network. Any reduced rate should be evaluated against transportation, transfer, processing, and contractual costs to ensure that the total cost of securing the feedstock remains favorable relative to the value of the additional tons.

Together, expanded hauling access and strategic transfer-station pricing could allow R&E to offer generators a more complete organics management solution rather than simply a processing destination.

5.4 Build a Diversified SSO Generator Portfolio

R&E should develop a diversified portfolio of SSO generators that reduces reliance on any single generator, sector, or material stream. Foth's assessment identified opportunities across manufacturing, institutional, commercial, public-sector, and other non-residential sources; however, each presents different considerations related to tonnage, availability, material quality, economics, logistics, and long-term reliability.

R&E should prioritize baseline feedstock from sources capable of providing consistent and predictable SSO volumes, including manufacturers, institutional campuses, public facilities, and established collection programs. These commitments should form the foundation of R&E's strategy for meeting its annual contractual requirements. Supplemental feedstock from public events, damaged or rejected freight, seasonal operations, and other intermittent sources can provide additional tonnage but should not be relied upon to fulfill recurring commitments.

R&E should maintain more potential feedstock in its development portfolio than the 15,500-ton per year contractual requirement. Generator participation, production volumes, market conditions, existing outlets, and operational needs will change over time. Maintaining a diversified and sufficiently deep portfolio will provide flexibility to replace lost tonnage, respond to market changes, and build greater long-term feedstock security.

5.5 Look Within the R&E Partnership

R&E should prioritize opportunities within Ramsey and Washington Counties where established relationships provide greater ability to influence SSO diversion and organics management development. Both partner counties have organics diversion programs at county-owned facilities, but collected material is not currently delivered to R&E partnership outlets. These programs represent a practical near-term opportunity because source separation is already occurring and the counties can directly influence how material generated within their operations is managed.

R&E should work with both counties to inventory existing programs, identify current SSO destinations, and evaluate opportunities to direct suitable material through R&E partnership facilities. This effort should also identify additional county- and municipal-owned facilities where organics collection could be established or expanded.

The partnership should extend beyond publicly owned facilities. Ramsey and Washington Counties can help identify notable commercial SSO generators through existing reporting, BizRecycling relationships, regulatory programs, and other business engagement. R&E and the counties should jointly prioritize generators with significant disposal-based food waste and identify where grants, technical assistance, incentives, or future organics requirements could overcome barriers to source separation and create new diversion.

R&E and its partner counties should also evaluate opportunities to align BizRecycling organics funding with R&E's organics diversion strategy. For future grants supporting new or expanded organics collection, R&E should consider whether funding agreements could require, prioritize, or incentivize delivery of eligible SSO to an R&E partnership facility when operationally and economically practical. This approach could ensure that public investments in new organics diversion programs also support development of reliable feedstock for the AD Facility.

Any such requirement should preserve flexibility where another management option provides a higher-value beneficial use or where delivery through the R&E system is not operationally or economically practical. Grant conditions should be structured to create new diversion and strengthen R&E's feedstock base rather than unnecessarily redirect material from established beneficial uses.

Although individual opportunities may provide modest tonnage, the R&E partnership offers greater influence, predictability, and access to implementation tools than many opportunities in the broader market. Coordinating public-sector programs, commercial generator outreach, funding, and policy can help R&E build reliable baseline feedstock while advancing organics diversion within its own service area.

5.6 Pursue Additional Metro County Partnership Opportunities

R&E should strengthen partnerships with metro counties and municipalities to identify opportunities to aggregate SSO through existing and expanding organics collection programs. County-reported tonnages demonstrate that significant quantities of residential and commercial SSO are already moving through the region, while comparison with ReFED food waste estimates indicates substantial additional diversion potential. R&E should engage metro counties to understand existing material flows, future collection plans, processing needs, and opportunities where R&E can provide additional or more efficient processing capacity.

Hennepin and Dakota Counties should be prioritized for continued engagement based on both the scale of their existing SSO programs and remaining diversion potential. In 2024, Hennepin County reported approximately 26,100 tons of combined SSO, compared with approximately 232,500 tons of estimated food waste generation. Dakota County reported approximately 31,700 tons of combined SSO, compared with approximately 82,800 tons of estimated food waste generation. While these differences should not be interpreted as readily available SSO, they demonstrate that both counties have established organics collection systems and substantial additional food waste that may warrant further evaluation for diversion.

R&E should work with these and other metro counties to identify large commercial generators, expanding residential programs, municipally sponsored collection systems, and material streams currently disposed rather than beneficially managed. County relationships may also provide opportunities to coordinate technical assistance, incentives, grants, policy initiatives, and other tools that can help create new diversion rather than simply redirect existing SSO from established beneficial-use outlets.

Regional partnerships can provide more than individual feedstock opportunities. Establishing R&E as a processing and program partner for metro-area organics can aggregate material from multiple sources, create new diversion, and develop a more reliable pipeline of baseline feedstock for the AD Facility.

5.7 Pilot High-Potential SSO Opportunities

R&E should develop targeted pilot programs with priority generators to validate opportunities before pursuing longer-term agreements. Pilots can provide R&E and generators with actual operating data on SSO quantities, material quality, contamination, collection requirements, transportation, processing compatibility, and total management costs.

Foth's work with correctional facilities demonstrates the value of this approach. Field evaluation can replace assumptions with observed data and identify operational issues before either party commits to a long-term arrangement. R&E should apply this model to other high-potential generators where available tonnage is promising but additional validation is needed to determine whether the material represents a reliable and economically viable feedstock source.

Pilots should be structured with a defined duration, measurement approach, and pathway to longer-term implementation. Priority candidates should include generators with meaningful recurring tonnage, material compatible with the AD Facility, demonstrated interest, and an identified operational or economic reason to consider an alternative organics management solution. Where necessary, R&E could support temporary containers, hauling, technical assistance, or other limited implementation costs to remove barriers to participation.

Successful pilots should transition quickly from testing to negotiation of longer-term feedstock commitments, while unsuccessful pilots should provide R&E with enough information to redirect resources toward stronger opportunities.

5.8 Expand the Food Scraps Pickup Program

R&E should also evaluate opportunities to expand its residential Food Scraps Pickup Program beyond Ramsey and Washington Counties. Municipalities within the service areas of R&E partnership transfer stations equipped to separate food scrap bags from MSW may provide a pathway for expansion without establishing a separate organics collection system. R&E should work with interested municipalities, counties, haulers, and transfer station partners to evaluate collection compatibility, sorting capacity, transportation logistics, program costs, and the potential contribution toward R&E's contractual commitments.

R&E should also evaluate whether the Food Scraps Pickup Program could be adapted for small commercial generators that use cart-based MSW collection. Restaurants, bars, offices, small retailers, and other businesses using 95-gallon carts or similar service may generate quantities of food scraps that are too small to justify dedicated commercial organics collection. Allowing participating businesses to separate food scraps using the Food Scraps Pickup Program could provide an alternative pathway that leverages existing MSW collection and R&E's bag-sorting infrastructure.

A small commercial program could allow R&E to aggregate modest quantities from many generators into a meaningful feedstock stream while reducing the collection barrier that can prevent small businesses from participating in organics diversion. Initial implementation should focus on a controlled pilot with generators whose collection routes deliver to compatible R&E partnership transfer stations. The pilot should evaluate material quality, participation, collection and sorting impacts, incremental cost, and recovered tonnage before broader expansion.

Expanding the Food Scraps Pickup Program could create new organics diversion rather than relying solely on redirecting SSO from established beneficial-use outlets. If operationally viable, the program could become a scalable source of baseline feedstock while extending access to organics diversion for municipalities and small businesses that may not otherwise have a practical collection option.

5.9 Target Underserved Manufacturing Residuals

R&E should prioritize food manufacturing residuals that lack a consistent, cost-effective, or reliable management outlet rather than competing directly for clean residuals already serving established beneficial uses. Foth’s assessment found that many high-volume, clean manufacturing residuals have established markets, including animal feed, food ingredients, land application, and anaerobic digestion. Some materials carry positive market value, making these tons less attainable and potentially more costly for R&E to secure.

The stronger opportunity lies in residual streams that existing markets cannot consistently manage. These may include off-specification products, packaged foods requiring depackaging, secondary production residuals, and materials affected by seasonal demand, processing limitations, or capacity constraints. For these streams, the AD Facility could provide manufacturers with a stable management option while creating incremental feedstock for R&E.

R&E should continue targeted engagement with food manufacturers to identify these underserved material streams and evaluate volume, material characteristics, processing requirements, transportation, current management costs, and long-term availability. Priority should be given to opportunities where the AD Facility provides a clear operational or economic advantage and creates additional organics diversion rather than simply shifting material from one established beneficial use to another.

RAMSEY/WASHINGTON RECYCLING & ENERGY
CONNECTING VALUE TO WASTE

R&E BOARD MEETING DATE:	November 19, 2026			**AGENDA ITEM:**	VII.a		
SUBJECT:	2027 Legislative Platform						
TYPE OF ITEM:	☐	INFORMATION	☐	POLICY DISCUSSION	☒	ACTION	☐ CONSENT
SUBMITTED BY:	Trista Martinson, R&E Executive Director						

R&E BOARD ACTION REQUESTED:

Adoption and approval of the 2027 Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy (R&E) Legislative Platform.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The 2027 Minnesota Legislative Session will convene on January 12, 2027. R&E developed its first legislative platform in 2026. The proposed 2027 platform adds a new priority item and removes another. It also clarifies the R&E Board's support for Minnesota's Food Waste Management hierarchy.

Staff provided an overview of the draft 2027 platform and priority items at the October 29, 2026, R&E Board meeting.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PLAN:

Strategic Goal 1B: R&E-led regional coordination on policy and plans for greater regional impact.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Draft Resolution (R&EB-2026-22)
2. Draft 2027 R&E Legislative Platform

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

None.

AUTHORIZED SIGNATURES		**DATE**
R&E EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR		11/4/26
WASHINGTON COUNTY ATTORNEY		11/4/26

RAMSEY/WASHINGTON
RECYCLING & ENERGY
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RESOLUTION R&EB-2026-22
2027 Legislative Platform

WHEREAS, The Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy Board (R&E Board) is governed by the Amended and Restated Joint Powers Agreement by and between Ramsey County and Washington County dated November 12, 2024 (Joint Powers Agreement); and

WHEREAS, The 2027 Legislative Session begins on January 12, 2027; and

WHEREAS, The R&E Board has a registered lobbyist on staff to advocate for R&E's priorities and policy goals at the Minnesota State Capitol. NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, The R&E Board approves and adopts the proposed 2027 Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy Legislative Platform.

_____
Mary Jo McGuire, Board Chair
November 19, 2026

_____
Attest
November 19, 2026



RAMSEY/WASHINGTON RECYCLING & ENERGY

2026 7 Legislative Platform

VISION: VIBRANT, HEALTHY COMMUNITIES WITHOUT WASTE

Priority Items

- **Infrastructure investment:** Secure additional funding for the development of an anaerobic digester to transform food scraps and other organic waste into renewable natural gas and biochar.
- ~~**Regional governance:** Pursue legislation to provide counties with the opportunity to create effective regional integration of challenges.~~
- **Solid waste advisory committee:** Support the establishment of a state/county solid waste advisory committee to collaborate on addressing critical and emerging priorities to help create a more comprehensive solid waste system and enhance environmental outcomes.
- **Public health & safety:** Ensure appropriate management of infectious waste through penalties, training, enhanced protocols and enforcement.

Policy Goals

Support increased funding for counties to meet statutory requirements for solid waste management

Support product stewardship and extended producer responsibility approaches to reduce the impact of products on the environment

Support funding for research and development of emerging technologies to process, handle and reuse solid waste

Support funding and policy to promote new markets for waste and recyclable materials

Support policies and funding to support organics collection programs, business recycling endeavors, and other efforts aimed at reducing the amount of waste generated in Minnesota

Support funding for programs and policies keep products and resources in use for a more equitable circular economy

Maintain Minnesota's waste management ~~hierarchy~~ and wasted food hierarchies

Explore statutory updates to provide counties with the opportunity to create effective regional integration of challenges.

Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy (R&E) is a joint effort of Ramsey and Washington counties to responsibly manage waste, recover value from discarded materials and support programs that help residents and businesses reduce waste and recycle better.

NEED MORE INFORMATION?

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RAMSEY/WASHINGTON RECYCLING & ENERGY
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R&E BOARD MEETING DATE:	November 19, 2026				**AGENDA ITEM:**	VIII.	
SUBJECT:	Updates and Reports						
TYPE OF ITEM:	☒	INFORMATION	☐	POLICY DISCUSSION	☐	ACTION	☐ CONSENT
SUBMITTED BY:	Trista Martinson, R&E Executive Director						

R&E BOARD ACTION REQUESTED:

For information only.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

a. **Commissioner Updates**
Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy (R&E) Board members will provide updates on waste-related ad hoc committees. A summary report will be given on the November 5, 2026, Partnership on Waste and Energy Board meeting.

b. **Executive Director Update**
The R&E Executive Director will provide a report to the board.

c. **Strategic Partnerships Update**
Staff will provide a report to the board.

d. **Programs Update**
Staff will provide updates on programmatic efforts.

e. **Facility Update**
Staff will provide updates on R&E Center projects and operations.

f. **Procurement Report**
Staff will provide a written report of new contracts and amendments executed under the authority of R&E's procurement guidelines during the period of Oct. 1-31, 2026. Funding for the contracts is available in the approved Joint Activities (Programs), Facility and Equipment Maintenance & Replacement (EM&R) budgets, following approval as to form by the Ramsey County or Washington County attorney's office.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PLAN:

a. Strategic Goal 1A: Public awareness & trust through brand management, transparency and engagement.
b. Strategic Goal 1B: R&E-led regional coordination on policy and plans for greater regional impact.
c. Strategic Initiative 4Ai: Implement and sustain a streamlined and consistent portfolio of upstream programs (waste reduction, reuse, recycling), informed by data and community engagement.

d. Strategic Initiative 3Aii: Continue to operate an industry-leading waste processing facility and innovate for increased landfill diversion.
e. Strategic Goal 4C: Robust obligation tracking and reporting.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. R&E Center Tours Report
2. Procurement Report

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

None.

AUTHORIZED SIGNATURES		**DATE**
R&E EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR		11/4/26

RAMSEY/WASHINGTON RECYCLING & ENERGY
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R&E Center Tours
Completed – October 2026

Group	Group Type	Date	# of visitors
Khoo Consulting	Business	10/1/2026	4
Community Tour	Community	10/7/2026	5
MRRA Workshop and Tour	Industry	10/8/2026	20
Compost Council	FSPP	10/8/2026	22
Cimarron Teen Center	Educational	10/15/2026	6
Candidate Tour: Angela Thompson	Governmental	10/19/2026	2
White Bear Area Chamber of Commerce	Business	10/20/2026	6
R&E Staff Community	Internal	10/20/2026	22
St. Paul Area Chamber of Commerce	Business	10/21/2026	5
MN Chapter-Women in Cleantech & Sustainability	Industry	10/21/2026	3
Mad House of Learning	Educational	10/27/2026	5
Sustainable Stillwater	Community	10/29/2026	25

Total Number of Tours Completed: 12
Total Number of Tour Attendees: 125

RAMSEY/WASHINGTON RECYCLING & ENERGY
CONNECTING VALUE TO WASTE

Report of all professional service and supplies, equipment, material and labor (SEML) contracts, amendments and solicitations issued and executed under the authority of Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy's procurement guidelines (Resolution R&EB-2025-01) between Oct. 1-31, 2026.

Vendor	Effective Date	Description	NTE/Budgeted Amount	Procurement Type
Krech, Obrien Mueller & Associate, Inc.	9/1/26	Facility - Architectural service.	$35,000 per year	Professional Services
Bridging	8/1/26	Programs – Mattress collection & recycling.	$50,000 per year	Professional Services
Ecochallenge Corporation dba Ecochallenge.org	1/1/27	Partnership on Waste and Energy – Online engagement & education.	$25,910 per year	Professional Services
ESABA Charitable Foundation	10/21/26	Programs – BizRecycling partners.	$30,000 per year	Professional Services
Waste Robotics, Inc.	10/20/26	Facility – Robotic sortation equipment.	$460,000	SEML
Van Meter, Inc.	11/7/26	Facility – TechConnect support services.	$10,618 per year	Professional Services
Cintas Corporate Services, Inc.	10/10/26	Facility – Uniform services.	Rate Setting	SEML

The procurement team also processed 21 grants or amendments for deconstruction, food recovery, waste reduction/pollution prevention, BizRecycling and multi-unit recycling programs in the amount of $213,296.20. These grants were distributed throughout Ramsey and Washington Counties to assist in waste reduction and recycling efforts. Grant funds helped each recipient by providing materials and infrastructure needed to better support waste reduction and recycling efforts, as well as expand waste reduction and recycling education for their residents, employees and visitors.