America Recycles Day Summit – Enhancing Measurement Roundtable Discussion Webinar

July 16, 2019, 3:00 PM – 5:00 PM Eastern

Call-in Number: Ex. 6 Personal Privacy (PP); Conference Code: Ex. 6 Personal Privacy (PP)

Link to Skype Web App:

[HYPERLINK Ex. 6 Personal Privacy (PP)]

Purpose:

- Discuss definitions of municipal solid waste (MSW) and recycling and flow diagrams to establish process boundaries.
- Discuss how to move forward with identifying measures and metrics.
- Discuss the Municipal Measurement Program and their tool for standardizing terminology and methodologies.

Meeting Notes

Welcome, Introductions, and Agenda Review

- EPA welcomed the group and thanked them for participating in the call. Invited participants took roll call and additional participants identified themselves.
- Pat Tallarico (Enventive Consulting) reviewed the agenda and purpose of the meeting.

Municipal Measurement Program Presentation

Rick Penner (Emerge Technologies) presented on the Municipal Measurements Program (MMP). The MMP provides municipalities with a free, customizable tool – Re-TRAC Connect – to analyze their materials management programs. The goals of the program are to harmonize terminology and methodologies; turn data into knowledge; and help improve recycling programs.

Across the United States, over 120 municipalities are participating in the MMP. A feature was developed to allow state and county government agencies to access municipal data. The Government Data Management Plan allows governments to access information in their jurisdiction. This is a paid service to access the data in their jurisdiction. The Government Data Management Plan provides access to MMP Data (program manager interface that allows access/filter/review of data) and a suite of reports on the data.

The system employs a collaborative approach to data review and verify the data. They work with The Recycling Partnership in this data verification process to ensure quality of the data.

Emerge will be working with The Recycling Partnership to expand the use of the tool and develop new modules, reports, and tools.

Mr. Penner requested that the group consider adding a longer-term action to help promote broader use of the MMP tools.

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Definitions
The group reviewed the definitions compiled by EPA and working with Debra Kantner of Environmental Research & Education Foundation (EREF). EREF is in the process of compiling all state definitions, and they will share those with the group in the future. EPA will review these additional definitions to identify any new terms or concepts that may not be included in the existing definitions.

The group reviewed the definitions of municipal solid waste recycling and provided the following feedback:

- A simpler definition of recycling such as the one by National Recycling Coalition is better. A simpler definition can be paired with descriptors such as "industrial" recycling, "municipal" recycling, etc.
- EPA should review the International Standards Organization (ISO) and Federal Trade Commission (FTC) definitions to ensure consistency where needed.
    - Action: Kyla Fisher will send the ISO definition.
- Pre-consumer recycling makes up a significant portion of the nation's recycling and should not be excluded. This could also impact international comparisons of recycling rates. Participants advised against differentiating between pre-and post-consumer recycling in the definition.
- Connecting recycling exclusively to MSW continues to reinforce the concept that materials are waste instead f valuable, renewable materials.
- The definition should focus on the process of recycling.
- Any definition needs to be scientifically accurate and align with ISO standards. We cannot create something that later on is in conflict with other definitions. It could be defined in the activities of solid waste treatment, but have the conditions under the system versus the generic definition.
- The definition of recycling should not include purchase of recycled materials. What is typically measured is what is collected and sent to the Materials Recovery Facility (MRF). Buying recycled is more aligned with the concept of circular economy.
- Transformation of materials can occur in many ways. It may not be appropriate to include what type of transformation occurs (e.g., chemical, physical, biological, etc.) within the definition of recycling.
    - Action: The group agreed to have a follow-up conversation about the concept of chemical recycling.
    - Action: Trina Matta will provide information on chemical recycling.
- Although the concept of processing something into another product could include composting, there were differing opinions about whether this should be included in the definition of recycling, partly because the regulatory context for both are different.
- Energy recovery should be kept separate from recycling as indicated in EPA's non-hazardous waste management hierarchy.

The group briefly reviewed the systems maps. They agreed to review them before the next call and provide feedback at that time.

- Action: Group members will review the systems maps and be ready to discuss them on the next call. In particular, provide feedback on whether all of the elements of the system are represented.

Systems Map
The group discussed the plan for identifying measures and metrics and agreed to focus on that after the systems map and definitions were determined.

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Discuss Longer-term Actions

The group briefly discussed the longer-term actions.

- EPA is focused on getting definitions and metrics completed and then will begin updating the 1997 Measurement Guide.
- Action: The group agreed that Rick Penner will work with EPA to identify a potential additional longer-term action to help promote the use of the MMP.

Next Steps

The group agreed to have another call in August before the Resource Recycling Conference, which will be held in New Orleans from August 26-29. Some participants indicated that they will be attending, and it may provide a good opportunity to advance a work product.

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