

2007 Annual Solid Waste Report – Executive Summary

The Georgia Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Act of 1990 requires the Department of Community Affairs (DCA), with the cooperation of the Department of Natural Resources' Environmental Protection Division (EPD) and the Georgia Environmental Facilities Authority (GEFA), to report annually on the state of solid waste management in Georgia. Per the Act, the FY 2007 report, covering the period of July 1, 2006 - June 30, 2007, contains information on:

- the status of local and regional solid waste management planning in Georgia;
- the number and types of solid waste handling facilities in the state;
- the remaining capacity of each permitted solid waste handling facility;
- the number and types of solid waste grants and loans made to local governments;
- a compilation and analysis of solid waste management data provided by cities and counties through their completed Solid Waste Survey;
- a statement of progress achieved in meeting the 25% waste reduction goal established in subsection (c) of Code Section 12-8-21¹;
- a statement of progress achieved in solid waste management education;
- any revisions in the state solid waste management plan deemed necessary; and
- recommendations for improving the management of solid waste in Georgia.

Further, the Act requires DCA to report on the status of litter prevention and abatement in the state. The litter report shall include but not be limited to:

- An itemization of expenditures made from the Solid Waste Trust Fund for the prevention and abatement of litter;
- A compilation and analysis of litter prevention, collection, and enforcement efforts;
- An assessment of littering in the state;
- A statement of progress in achieving a litter prevention ethic; and
- Recommendations for improving litter abatement and prevention efforts.

This litter report is available online at www.dca.ga.gov, under Office of Environmental Management programs.

The Solid Waste Management Act requires all local governments to have, or be included in, a solid waste management plan that demonstrates adequate waste disposal capacity and collection capability for a 10-year period. Thirty-two (32) cities and eight (8) counties did not have an approved plan by the end of FY 2007. Local governments that failed to adopt approved solid waste management plans are listed and continually updated online at: www.GeorgiaPlanning.com

During FY 2007, 17.7 million tons of waste was sent to Georgia disposal facilities. Most of this waste enters lined, monitored landfills operating under federal Subtitle D regulations. A small and dwindling percentage of the Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) enters unlined landfills that have been allowed to operate under their pre-Subtitle D permits. Construction and Demolition waste (C&D), a subset of MSW, generally goes to unlined landfills that are less expensive to operate.

The state continues to have an adequate supply of permitted disposal capacity with 27.7 years of remaining permitted Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) disposal capacity and 19.3 years of remaining permitted Construction and Demolition (C&D) disposal capacity. It is important that the state and local governments carefully monitor the remaining permitted disposal capacity throughout the state. In FY 2007 more than a third of the permitted disposal capacity in the state was contained in just 4 of the 130 landfills. This concentration heightens the need to carefully monitor the financial assurances of these and all the disposal facilities in the state. It also emphasizes the

¹ During the 2005 Legislative session the 25% per capita waste disposal reduction goal was reworded to state that every effort should be made to reduce the per capita disposal rate of waste sent to MSW landfills in Georgia.

need for local solid waste management planning and annual monitoring of the implementation of these plans. The Northeast Georgia RDC continues to have less than 10 years of permitted disposal capacity. Demonstration of capacity and capacity assurance is highly dependent upon the permitting process and the time it takes for a solid waste handling permit to be issued. (See section A Disposal and Capacity and section B Per Capita Disposal for more details)

The level and type of solid waste, recycling and yard trimmings collection services provided throughout the state varies greatly depending upon a community's size, density and demographic profile. To track solid waste management trends, DCA administers an annual survey of all local governments in Georgia². The encouraging news is the numbers of communities reporting they had recycling services available were reported higher than they have been for the past decade.

During FY 2006, 22 cities and 29 counties reported actively promoting waste minimization practices such as home composting or beneficial reuse of yard trimmings. During FY 2006, 326 cities and 56 counties reported collecting yard trimmings for diversion from MSW landfills. (See section C: Solid Waste & Recycling Collection of the report for more details.)

Education efforts are essential to waste reduction efforts. Keep Georgia Beautiful continues supporting the waste reduction and education efforts of the 74 Keep America Beautiful affiliates in Georgia. Also, DCA conducts Waste in Place workshops and workshops related to solid waste planning periodically. DCA currently has no metric for gauging the effectiveness of these efforts.

Another growing trend that needs to be carefully monitored is the amount of waste imported to Georgia for disposal and its potential impact on future disposal capacity and Georgia's environment. With statewide MSW tipping fees at \$35.08 per ton (\$21.11 for C&D waste), far less than Northeastern states and Florida, Georgia landfills represent considerable cost-savings for companies moving large amounts of waste. Because the waste reduction goal specified in the Act includes all waste disposed in MSW landfills, this out-of-state waste is included in the state's progress toward meeting the waste reduction goal, and undercuts waste reduction and recycling efforts undertaken by Georgians. On a per capita basis, 7.45 pounds of waste entered MSW landfills daily during FY 2007, and nearly one pound/day of that came from outside Georgia's borders. (See section B: Per Capita Disposal and section D: MSW & C&D Landfill Tipping Fees of the report for more details)

Nearly \$600,000 from the Solid Waste Trust Fund was expended to support local government recycling and waste reduction grants in FY 2007. Almost \$370,000 went to provide scrap tire amnesty collections, and approximately \$225,000 was awarded by GEFA's Recycling and Waste Reduction grant program to support local recycling collection and processing capacity in seven communities. (See section E: Grants and Loans to Local Governments)

Historically funding from the SWTF had been used to support a variety of local government waste reduction programs throughout the state. In response to the needs identified in the 2006 Annual Solid Waste Report and the need to "change business as usually" to affect a change (reduction) in the amount of MSW waste being disposed in the state, a statewide waste reduction and recycling strategy was drafted with the input of local governments and Georgia businesses using recycled content materials. The four part strategy, presented for implementation and funding is outlined below:

- Away From Home Recycling Equipment to facilitate recycling at sporting events, festivals and other special events

² The considerable lag time in gathering, verifying and analyzing this data results in the previous years' collection and yard trimmings management data being used to compile this report.

- Recycling Hubs Infrastructure dollars to develop collection capability leveraging the private sector's shift toward single-stream processing capability, and increasing collection in rural areas of the state.
- Statewide Recycling Campaign An umbrella marketing campaign focused on increasing recycling participation. This effort will push Georgia residents to look for recycling at special events and their homes and places of work.
- ReTrac – Reporting Metrics All of the above efforts will be tracked via an innovative online reporting mechanism that will link the solid waste annual surveys local governments must complete for DCA, and results from the Away-From-Home recycling campaign.

These efforts are in line with a waste reduction goal that identifies specific targets to meet the general goal of reducing the amount of MSW disposed on a per capita basis. The waste disposal characterization study conducted in 2004 identified what Georgians were throwing away on an annual basis. Using this data, DCA was able to identify the Georgia industry demand for these materials and convened a Recycling Stakeholder Group with over 60 representatives, including representatives from businesses, local governments, and other state agencies to formulate a commodity based waste disposal reduction goal(s). Establishing a baseline goal was the first step to measuring waste reduction and recycling success. The group identified the following goals:

Per Capita MSW Disposal Rate/MSW Reduction Goal					
Commodity	Actual 2004 Lbs/person	Projected 2012 Lbs/person	Projected % 2012	Projected 2017 Lbs/person	Projected % 2017
Glass	0.153	0.140	8%	0.140	8%
Paper	1.181	1.000	15%	0.850	28%
Metal	0.228	0.198	13%	0.186	18%
Plastic	0.663	0.560	16%	0.530	20%
Total	2.23	1.99	11%	1.71	23%

The per capita disposal rate in the state continues to rise, mainly due to the continuing rise in out-of-state waste imports. The per capita disposal rate for MSW generated and disposed within the state remains relatively constant and the above mentioned strategy has been formulated to meet the states goal to reduce the amount of MSW being disposed. From the research conducted it is clear that Georgian's are disposing of valuable resources that are needed by Georgia based industries. The strategy developed is to support these industries by diverting these materials from disposal.

The continued use of inert landfills for yard trimmings and growth in the use of solid waste transfer stations needs to be monitored and addressed in local solid waste planning efforts. As the state implements the strategy for reducing the MSW disposal rate, efforts to quantify and address C&D waste reduction and solid waste from mining, agricultural, or silviculture operations or industrial processes or operations needs to be completed.

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