

2008 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 2008 report, covering the period of July 1, 2007 - June 30, 2008, 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 goal established in subsection (c) of Code Section 12-8-21;
- 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.

This and previous reports are available online at www.dca.ga.gov, under Office of Environmental Management programs.

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. Twenty-six (26) cities and seven (7) counties did not have an approved plan by the end of FY 2008. Local governments that failed to adopt approved solid waste management plans are listed and continually updated online at: www.GeorgiaPlanning.com

During FY 2008, 16.3 million tons of waste was sent to permitted Georgia disposal facilities. Most of this waste entered lined, monitored landfills operating under federal Subtitle D regulations. A small and dwindling percentage of the Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) entered 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 26.6 years of remaining permitted Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) disposal capacity and 25.1 years of remaining permitted Construction and Demolition (C&D) disposal capacity. It is important for the state and local governments to carefully monitor the remaining permitted disposal capacity throughout Georgia. In FY 2008 more than a third of the permitted disposal capacity in the state was contained in just 4 of the 117 active landfills. This concentration heightens the need to carefully monitor the financial assurances of these and all the disposal facilities in the state. Without

proper financial assurance, the incredible costs of cleaning up abandoned, leaking landfills may fall to local governments and possibly the state.

This concentrated disposal capacity also emphasizes the need for local solid waste management planning. 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. This process typically takes several years, during which time permits for surrounding facilities may lapse or private sector business arrangements to accept varying rates of material for disposal can greatly alter the projected life expectancy of existing landfills. (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 Georgia¹. It is encouraging that despite the current economic recession, the numbers of communities reporting they had recycling services available were reported higher than they have been for the past decade.

During FY 2008, 28 cities and 21 counties reported actively promoting waste minimization practices such as home composting or beneficial reuse of yard trimmings. During FY 2008, 304 cities and 45 counties reported collecting yard trimmings for diversion from MSW landfills. (See section C: Solid Waste & Recycling Collection of the report for more details.)

The increasing use of inert landfills and transfer stations, for which no reporting requirements exist, should 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.

Education efforts are essential to waste reduction efforts. Keep Georgia Beautiful continues supporting the waste reduction and education efforts of the 77 Keep America Beautiful affiliates in Georgia. As state grant funds that have historically helped local governments educate and enforce litter abatement efforts diminish, these local affiliates are struggling to find the necessary resources to keep their communities livable. DCA has conducted Waste in Place workshops and workshops related to solid waste planning during 2008.

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 \$35.15 per ton (\$23.72 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 in Georgia, 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, 7.14 pounds of waste entered MSW landfills daily during FY 2008, 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)

During Fiscal Year 2008, over 2.9 million dollars (\$2,927,020) in Solid Waste Trust Fund (SWTF) receipts were awarded to Georgia communities to help them manage solid waste. EPD disbursed over \$118,000 in Local Government Enforcement and Education grants in FY 2008. The program funded projects in 19 communities, offsetting the local costs to develop and

maintain a local code enforcement program to prevent and enforce against the illegal disposal and management of scrap tires and solid waste.

GEFA disbursed \$241,124.85 in *Recycling and Waste Reduction Grants* in FY 2008. The program funded projects in 11 local communities, offsetting the local costs of waste reduction and recycling through the purchase of equipment for local government recycling centers. Another financial support program offered by GEFA is their low interest revolving loan program available to local governments. Drawing upon funds from its bond proceeds and revolving loan program, GEFA loaned \$4,655,000 to three (3) local jurisdictions in FY 2008 for landfill construction and management.

In FY 2008, DCA's Office of Environmental Management implemented two (2) recycling infrastructure grants, the Away-from-Home Recycling Grant and the Regional Recycling Hub Grant programs, both of which were supported by Solid Waste Trust Fund dollars. DCA awarded \$2,567,518 in FY 2008 to fund these recycling infrastructure grant programs.

The Away-From-Home Recycling grant included \$350,000 dollars from the SWTF, a program partner contribution \$40,000 Curbside Value Partnership (CVP), and \$25,000 in corporate donations from Coca Cola for a total program value of \$415,000. The program funded grant projects in 29 communities across the State. So far, more than 42 tons of lightweight materials have been diverted from the waste stream for recycling. More importantly, nearly 3 million patrons attending these special events were exposed to the recycling message. And it's important to note that most of the events using the equipment had never collected recyclables before.

The Regional Recycling Hubs grant was funded with \$2,217,518 from the SWTF. DCA leveraged additional funding totaling \$8,042,950 (\$4,938,696 in partner-level support and \$3,104,254 local government support) for the Hub program. For every \$1 (one dollar) of Solid Waste Trust Fund grant funding, DCA leveraged over \$3.60 in partner match dollars from private and local government support. Grants were awarded to four (4) local governments across the State.

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 usual" 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
- 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%

In FY 2008, for the first time, Georgia saw a significant reduction in the per-capita disposal rate. The amount of waste sent to MSW landfills for every Georgia resident fell nearly half a pound, from 7.45 to 7.14 pounds per person, per day. While the economic recession has certainly had an impact upon disposal rates, it can also be fairly argued that the state's aggressive recycling programs and private-sector partnerships are beginning to have an effect. But to meet the goals outlined above, continued diligence, planning and funding will be needed.

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