

**DEQ Stakeholder Recycling Initiative**  
Outreach, Education, and Technical Assistance Subcommittee  
December 19, 2013

**Discussion Summary and Findings**

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The Outreach, Education, and Technical Assistance Subcommittee met with the following objectives:

1. Brainstorm and discuss strategies to expand efforts to provide outreach, education, and technical assistance.
2. Identify components of a successful statewide outreach campaign.
3. Identify budget and legislative amendments necessary for implementation of outreach, education, and technical assistance efforts.

The subcommittee focused on outreach, education, and technical assistance of the overall strategy to improve residential recycling in Michigan. After briefly discussing the barriers to recycling in Michigan, it was recognized that providing access to recycling opportunities alone will not improve recycling in Michigan. A majority of the meeting focused on the steps that need to be taken to develop a marketing plan and statewide campaign. The subcommittee also discussed how to provide recycling education to individuals and technical assistance to communities and service providers.

### **Campaign**

The subcommittee reviewed various existing recycling outreach/education campaigns and discussed what they like and do not like about different approaches. The subcommittee identified a need to foster a cultural shift toward recycling by capitalizing on existing pride in Michigan and our unique natural attributes. Also, the economic benefits of having a strong recycling economy were discussed; however more work will need to be done to ensure that the message resonates with the intended audience.

The importance of identifying why people do or do not recycle is an important first step to developing the marketing campaign, so that the campaign triggers the desired behavior change.

The Keep America Beautiful “I want to be recycled” campaign was reviewed. The campaign resonated with the group because it used familiar images. The idea of doing a similar campaign with iconic Michigan locations was discussed.

The subcommittee is interested in linking the recycling campaign with the Pure Michigan campaign. This will be met with unique challenges because Pure Michigan has strict limitations on how the brand can be used, however it was an idea the subcommittee would like to further explore.

The subcommittee recognized that the deposit law should not be looked at as “Michigan’s recycling law” and that recycling deposit beverage containers is not enough. The campaign should be focused on all residentially generated material not solely bottles and cans.

The following components are necessary to develop a marketing plan:

1. Identify the audience.
2. Identify the message.
3. Identify how to distribute the message.

Various methods to distribute the message were discussed focusing on broadcast media.

The subcommittee discussed how to identify a cost for the campaign by reviewing cost of other campaigns.

The following list of potential partners was identified, Keep America Beautiful, Pure Michigan, the soft drink industry, retailers, foundations, TOMRA, Michigan Waste Industries Association. The use of a media consulting firm was also discussed.

## **Education**

The importance of educating kids at a young age and throughout their school years about how and why to recycle was identified by the subcommittee as an important step in ensuring the desired cultural shift. Including recycling modules in educational curriculum is important. Michigan Environmental Education Curriculum is one avenue to promote recycling curriculum.

The idea of a cartoon character mascot was also discussed.

Because recycling programs vary by community, it will be important that education campaigns be tailored to the specific recycling opportunities available, thus there is an important role for local public and private involvement in educating consumers about the recycling opportunities available to them.

Standardized bin and signage, such as those promoted by Recycle Across America, was identified as a tool to improve consistency between communities, making recycling easier.

The subcommittee identified the need to ensure there is data available and planned for to be able to measure the success of the education and outreach efforts.

## **Technical Assistance**

The subcommittee recognized that counties, municipalities, townships, and private service providers such as solid waste haulers and materials recovery facility operators are in need of technical assistance to develop, operate, and expand recycling programs. Information on financing programs, operating collection and processing programs, and regulatory compliance assistance are all needed as recycling expands in Michigan.

Certification and training opportunities are needed, as well as supporting entrepreneurial business development through training and networking opportunities.

The subcommittee identified the State as the most appropriate source of leadership in providing technical assistance to local units of government.

## **Next Steps**

As funding and partnership opportunities present themselves, the subcommittee is interested in future meetings to further develop the education, outreach, and technical assistance components of the plan to improve recycling in Michigan.