



# GOVERNOR'S RECYCLING COUNCIL SOLID WASTE AND SUSTAINABILITY ADVISORY PANEL

Recommendations shift focus on Sustainable Materials  
Management to double Michigan's Recycling Rate

## WHAT ARE THE GRC AND THE SWSAP?

The purpose of the Governor's Recycling Council is to advise the Governor and the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality on implementing the Governor's Residential Recycling Plan and other related issues so that the state will achieve a 30% municipal solid waste recycling rate within 2 years. The purpose of the SWSAP is to take a comprehensive look at Michigan's current solid waste laws to determine ways to more effectively drive sustainable management of waste and end of life materials, rather than just disposal. Both groups are comprised of industry experts such as environmental groups, consultants, academia, and business and industry with knowledge and experience in these fields.

## WHAT ARE SOME OF THE MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS?

Both groups address the need to develop a sustainable materials management infrastructure, such as recycling, composting, and anaerobic digestion. The SWSAP recommends a new, revitalized solid waste law that focuses on including these materials management options as a focus for waste rather than just disposal. They recommend creating a level playing field for oversight of materials management infrastructure, ensuring adequate funding for state and local implementation of responsibilities, and revamping the county solid waste planning process. The Governor's Recycling Council (GRC) has developed recommendations that use this new materials management planning process to establish measurable county recycling goals and to promote access and incentives to recycling. They recommend education and outreach, market development, technical assistance, funding, and leadership methods at multiple levels to achieve these goals.

## WHY DO WE NEED THESE RECOMMENDATIONS?

Currently, Michigan's solid waste laws are relatively silent on promoting other materials management options such as waste reduction, recycling, composting, and anaerobic digestion, which has contributed to a relatively low municipal rate within the state. These groups envision a dynamic and robust materials management economy that addresses these issues and benefits a wide variety of individuals, organizations, governments, and businesses. They shift the focus to seeing solid waste as a resource that promotes economic vitality, ecological integrity, and improved quality of life for all throughout Michigan.

## WHAT DOES THIS ALL MEAN FOR...?

- **Local Governments:** Less focus on regulatory requirements to ensure disposal capacity, siting of landfills, and managing import/export of waste. Fewer resources needed for materials management facilities. An increase in tools for local governments in partnership with private recycling service providers to establish recycling collection systems using industry best practices. Valuable materials will remain circulating in our local economies, creating economic opportunities and stronger communities.
- **Individual Residents:** Development and expansion of recycling opportunities for residents, which ultimately leads to more job opportunities and a stronger economy. Increased oversight of materials management activities can additionally lead to decreased occurrences of nuisances and risks to people and the environment.
- **Businesses:** Additional options for managing waste, as well as greater ability to achieve recycling and zero-landfill goals, increasing public perception in terms of corporate responsibility. More recycled and utilized materials available to Michigan manufacturers. Freer markets from the deletion of restrictive import/export provisions in materials management planning. Minimum disposal capacity requirements. A more level playing field for businesses interested in investing in waste utilization facilities, equipment, and technology.

## WHAT DO WE NEED YOU TO DO?

As legislation is developed with assistance from DEQ, GRC, and SWSAP members, it will be extremely important for representatives from a variety of interest groups and sectors to not only support the recommendations of the GRC and SWSAP, but to help share outreach materials within your organization, encourage legislators to adopt the legislation, and continue to keep up with the progress of the development of this process.