



USAGypsum
Agri Marketing, Inc.

January 6, 2007

Senator Brubaker
36th Senate District
The State Capital
Senate Box 203036
Harrisburg, PA 17120-3036

Dear Senator Brubaker

I am writing to call your attention to a roadblock to recycling success which I believe impacts many facets of the Pennsylvania economy and environment.

Improving recycle rates for construction waste.

Background: During 2005 Pennsylvania disposed of 2.25 million tons of Construction & Demolition waste in land fills. This accounts for 17.5% of Pennsylvania's solid waste stream. EPA region 3 (DE, MD, PA, VA, WV and DC) is working to increase the reuse and recycling of C&D materials "The office of solid waste management has a goal of increasing reuse & Recycling of Construction & Demolition debris to 65% by 2011". (Source EPA strategic plan 2006)

The Problem

New construction waste falls under a patchwork of existing regulations. Under DEP regulations many easily recycled materials from new construction which are non-hazardous materials are land filled or recycled without oversight from DEP. These items include shingles, wood, and drywall.

Some materials can be recycled from new construction without regulation. They are "source separated" materials consisting of cardboard, glass, metals, paper and plastics. Clean fill is unregulated and includes uncontaminated soil, rock, stone, gravel, brick and block, concrete and used asphalt. "Salvaging" materials for reuse during construction, renovation or demolition are not wastes. Examples include bathroom fixtures, ceiling panels, doors, flooring, lighting fixtures, windows and more.

"Source separated" construction waste generated from industrial sources such as modular home manufacturing is considered "residual waste," which is subject to "permit by rule" and eligible for co-product status. Compliance is fairly inexpensive and uncomplicated for small recyclers and provides DEP oversight of recycled product uses and tonnage reports.

New construction waste wood, shingles and drywall generated at construction sites by contractors is considered "municipal solid waste" and recyclers are required to obtain "general permits" including permit fees, bonding, regular inspections and detailed record keeping. This complicated process reduces what could be a thriving industry led by many small local recyclers and employing a substantial work force.

The result of this situation is that many operations which recycle wood are operating without permits and completely outside DEP's jurisdiction or the materials are being simply land filled when they could easily be recycled and used as replacements for virgin materials.



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Solution

I recommend that new construction waste generated by contractors and separated at the construction site be granted "residual waste" status.

Results

The change would benefit a broad range of stakeholders involved in:

Agriculture: would reduce cost for soil amendments and fibers for animal bedding

Energy: would provide another source of clean wood fiber for wood pellet fuel and shingles for fuel.

State and local government: would benefit by increasing recycled tonnage.

Environment; would benefit by reducing land filling and fossil fuels use.

Landfills: would benefit from reduced drywall and organic matter which generate hydrogen sulfide gases.

General economy local jobs would be created by new recycling businesses.

It is difficult to envision a negative outcome from this proposed change.

Sincerely,

Terry L Weaver
Agri Marketing, Inc