

First Meeting

The working group conducted its first meeting September 2, 2016 in Murfreesboro, TN.

Purpose of the Meeting:

- lay the foundation and expectations of the group
- update on the progress of Objective 1 and Objective 8
- set the agenda and location for the next meeting

Second Meeting

The Objective 1 working group held its second meeting Thursday, September 29 in Cookeville, TN. The working group is currently focused on streamlining annual reporting to improve data accuracy, capture useful data, reduce burdensome reporting efforts, and improve solid waste planning statewide.

Purpose of the Meeting:

- review statutory and regulatory solid waste and materials management annual reporting requirements
- compare current reporting requirements to solid waste and materials management reporting and planning needs for local governments and TDEC
- identify opportunities to improve user experience
- discuss outputs and deliverables that TDEC can generate from data reported during the annual reporting process that are useful to all stakeholders.

TDEC Environmental Consultant Seth McCormick presented sections of the Tennessee Solid Waste Management Act and TDEC's Waste Reduction and Planning Rules that establish: various reporting requirements for municipal solid waste regions, counties, and recovered materials processing facilities; and preparation and submission of annual reports, progress reports covering 10 years, and annual progress reports on implementation of regional plans. Currently, each of the three aforementioned reports is established independently in statute and rule. However, information required as part of each of these reports is provided annually to TDEC in a single submittal via Re-TRAC Connect by March 31.

The group evaluated the usefulness of the reporting elements currently required for each of the individual reports. Discussions suggested that some reporting elements required in 815(b) were relevant in the early 1990's but are less relevant today. The group agreed to reconsider whether such reporting elements should continue to be

reported to the state on an annual basis. Specific contents that were flagged as no longer relevant were 815(b)(2)(C), (D), (E), 815(b)(3), (5), and (6).

The group then evaluated new potential questions to continue to meet statutory and regulatory requirements for the report due March 31, but significantly streamline questions compared to the previous annual reporting process. The working group provided feedback to the proposed questions and discussed other ways the report submission questions could be reworded to allow for more standardized Yes/No responses and drop down lists that would allow for analysis of responses across regions and previous reporting years.

Next Action Steps:

- incorporate working group feedback into a draft proposal for new annual reporting questions
- send updated document to the working group for additional comments or concerns and finalize for the 2017 reporting year.
- pre-populate the 2016 report survey question responses with past reporting data

Third Meeting
TDEC Cookeville Environmental Field Office
April 28, 2017

The Objective 1 & Objective 8 Working Group held its third meeting Friday, April 28, 2017 at the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation's (TDEC) Environmental Field Office located in Cookeville, TN. The meeting included topics discussing the APR reporting process and sustainable SW and Materials Management sustainable funding goals. The Objective 1 meeting notes can be found at <http://tn.gov/environment/article/sw-2015-2025-plan-objective-1>.

The working group members are:

Paula Mitchell (Paula.Mitchell@tn.gov), TDEC-Division of Solid Waste Management
Jonathan Jordan (Jonathan.Jordan@tn.gov), TDEC-Office of Policy and Planning
Kendra Abkowitz (Kendra.Abkowitz@tn.gov), TDEC-Office of Policy and Planning
Seth McCormick (Seth.McCormick@tn.gov), TDEC-Division of Solid Waste Management
Mac Nolen (mnolen@rutherfordcountyttn.gov), Rutherford County
Jim Lunn (dsolidwa@gmail.com), Dickson County
Nancy Zion (nancyz@williamson-tn.org), Williamson County
Joey Smith (jsmith@murfreesborotn.gov), City of Murfreesboro
Drew Thurman (solidwaste@knoxcounty.org), Knox County
Keith Street (kstreet@putnamcountyttn.gov), Putnam County
David Ashburn (dashburn@putnamcountyttn.gov), Putnam County
Dr. John McFadden (john@tectn.org), Tennessee Environmental Council

Purpose of the Meeting:

- Review draft updates to the narrative section of the Annual Progress Report
- Provide an update on TDEC's internal working group Objective 8 data analysis
- Present Objective 8 analysis conclusions and provide an overview of local government funding options

TDEC Senior Policy Analyst Jonathan Jordan presented an overview of Objective 8, which aims to ensure that state and local governments have sustainable funding sources in place to develop and support programs to responsibly manage MSW and materials in support of state solid waste and materials management goals, a history of the surcharge tipping fee, and the basic parameters and conclusions of the analysis performed. TDEC's internal working group conclusions were:

- An analysis of the 5 year grant program plan to projected Materials Management proceeds indicates there is not a financial necessity to seek an increase in the tipping fee at this time.

- Materials Management will continue to evaluate opportunities to best align grant program offerings with funding needs of local governments and other community entities.
- Materials Management will reassess the financial conditions of the program in 2019 in concurrence with the updated diversion goal.
- It is recommended a working group analyze and recommend options to maximize local funding means.

After the conclusions were presented, TDEC's Recovered Materials Manager Paula Mitchell discussed potential local government funding options currently available through the Solid Waste Management Act of 1991, T.C.A. § 68-211-835. Local government funding options can generate funds for management of MSW and materials which may serve as a complement to funding available through TDEC Materials Management grants. There are currently five statutory authorities that the local governments may consider:

- **Tipping Fee:** Landfill owners, including joint ventures, may impose tipping fee equal to, or a portion of, the estimated cost of providing solid waste management services.
- **Host Fee:** Counties host to a landfill used by other counties may impose a surcharge expended for solid waste management purposes, or for purposes related to offsetting costs incurred and other impacts resulting from the county being host. It may be distributed to municipalities that also incur costs as a result of the landfill.
- **Surcharge:** A county, municipality or solid waste authority is authorized to impose a surcharge on each ton of municipal solid waste received at a solid waste disposal facility for expenditure for solid waste collection, processing, or disposal purposes.
- **Solid Waste Disposal Fee:** A county, municipality or solid waste authority is authorized to impose a Solid Waste Disposal Fee to establish and maintain solid waste collection and disposal services, including, but not limited to, convenience centers. All residents must have access to these services and this option is available to all local governments.
- **Solid Waste Collection, Processing and Disposal Fee:** Davidson County may impose this fee to:
 - Establish and maintain solid waste collection, processing, and disposal services
 - Establish and maintain material recovery venues and programs
 - Cover costs borne by county as a consequence of disposal (i.e. lost revenues)

After review of the local funding options, Dr. John McFadden, Chief Executive Officer of Tennessee Environmental Council, delivered a presentation discussing the potential value of recoverable materials lost at the landfill, costs of municipal solid waste disposal and recycling, benefits of recycling, and obstacles and recommendations. This presentation prompted discussion on the need to perform more recycling cost-benefit analysis studies, provide more education opportunities to the public and elected officials, focus on the larger generators of solid waste, shift grant funding towards developing end markets

instead of collection/processing and review other funding options besides the ones discuss in T.C.A. § 68-211-835 like Pay-As-You-Throw.

Next Action Steps:

- Solicit working group member's feedback on the four draft APR documents and incorporate responses into a final version by June 20, 2017. The final document will be used for the 2017 reporting year.
- Once the narrative portion of the document is finalized, a meeting will be scheduled to review the quantitative data section of the report
- TDEC will continue to evaluate opportunities to best align grant program offerings with funding needs of local governments and other community entities

Fourth Meeting
TDEC Cookeville Environmental Field Office
March 8, 2018

The Objective 1 & Objective 8 Working Group held its fourth meeting on March, 8, 2018 at the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation's (TDEC) Environmental Field Office located in Cookeville, TN. The purpose of the meeting was for TDEC to provide the working group with an overview of a more streamlined narrative reporting format for the Annual Progress Report (APR), which incorporated previous working group comments and feedback. TDEC also presented an update on the status of the Request for Proposal (RFP) for securing a new APR data management vendor and continued analysis of the quantitative reporting data as it relates to solid waste planning regions meeting the 25% waste reduction and diversion goal (goal) and considerations for updating the goal (as outlined in Objective 1). For more information on Objective 1, please visit <https://www.tn.gov/environment/program-areas/solid-waste/2015-2025-solid-waste-management-plan/objective-1.html>.

Working group members in attendance (includes other TDEC staff in attendance):

Paula Mitchell (Paula.Mitchell@tn.gov), TDEC-Division of Solid Waste Management
Seth McCormick (Seth.McCormick@tn.gov), TDEC-Division of Solid Waste Management
Matthew Taylor (Matthew.K.Taylor@tn.gov), TDEC-Office of Policy and Sustainable Practices
Tara Wohlgemuth (Tara.Wohlgemuth@tn.gov), TDEC-Office of External Affairs, Cookeville
Rudy Collins (Rudy.Collins@tn.gov), TDEC-Office of External Affairs, Jackson
Mac Nolen (mnolen@rutherfordcountyttn.gov), Rutherford County
Nancy Zion (nancyz@williamson-tn.org), Williamson County
Joey Smith (jsmith@murfreesborotn.gov), City of Murfreesboro
Drew Thurman (solidwaste@knoxcounty.org), Knox County
Keith Street (kstreet@putnamcountyttn.gov), Putnam County
David Ashburn (dashburn@putnamcountyttn.gov), Putnam County
Dr. John McFadden (john@tectn.org), Tennessee Environmental Council

Purpose of the Meeting:

- Review and comment on the updates to the narrative reporting format in the APR.
- Update on the status of the RFP for an APR data management vendor.
- Review, comment, and discussion on quantitative data reporting in APR and how this contributes and is considered with respect to the diversion goal.

TDEC Environmental Consultant Seth McCormick provided a presentation that targeted three specific areas related to the APR and goal:

- **Narrative portion of the Annual Progress Report:** This section of the presentation provided an overview of updates related to the 10 Year Planning and Annual Progress Report narrative sections as well as a new TDEC Questions section.

The narrative portion of the APR is a culmination of previous working group efforts and is in its final draft.

- The 10 Year Planning section will be an addendum style approach to edits, with solid waste regions being able to update solely based on the changes they have made, and not the whole plan itself. There will be an option to provide “no update required” if no changes have occurred or are needed in the plan. For multi-county solid waste regions, changes will be made by each county and aggregated up, and it will allow for easy solid waste board sign-off.
- The narrative portions of the APR will also be updated. The updated language will better align with the 2025 plan and will have improved question structure with more checkboxes, drop-down options, and radio buttons (Yes/No options).

Questions will be removed or consolidated to make this portion short and concise. Report authors should see added functionality included in the new system secured through the RFP process; including upload features and other improvements identified by the working group.
- The final changes made to the APR will be the inclusion of a TDEC Questions section. This section will be structured such that TDEC can gain a better understanding of grant needs, funding allocations, issues with the system or process, market status, and will include survey style questions focusing on how TDEC can better assist the region reporting and plan implementation.
- **APR Vendor Request for Proposal Status:** The RFP status presentation was primarily an update from Seth McCormick on the approval processes and desired components and functionality included in the new system. During this portion of the presentation there were some questions as to the timing of the process; the RFP is likely going out by late March or early April, and a vendor will be secured by late May. By late summer to early-Fall the working group members will be given the opportunity to beta-test the new system and its components. Following beta-testing, Materials Management will begin conducting outreach and APR workshops in late Fall, with the expectation that the reporting system will be in place for use by January 1, 2019.
- **Quantitative data and continued analysis:** In this section of the presentation, Seth McCormick provided an overview of the Tennessee state statute which establishes the goal and its requirements, the methods for determining adherence to the goal, and other aspects of statutory authorities of the state. This discussion was followed by an overview of current issues with the goal and the continued analysis that TDEC has performed relative to the goal and generation, disposal, and diversion metrics reported. Analysis primarily focused on the data gaps or differences between Annual Progress Reporting and Solid Waste Origin Reports and how utilizing data from each remains necessary for TDEC to accurately calculate achievement toward the set goal and for counties to meet their goal.

Based on discussion and comments at the meeting, the working group preferred the new narrative reporting format and additional changes to come in the 2019 version of the system. There was discussion regarding how the County Mayor sign-off portion could be amended to make easier for Solid Waste Directors as well as a request for multiple users to make real-time edits while logged in at the same time. Mr. McCormick requested that any feedback relating to the APR qualitative narratives be submitted to TDEC within the next two weeks, or by April 1.

After the presentation concluded, TDEC's Recovered Materials Manager Paula Mitchell moderated a discussion to review the reporting system and format of the new system, local control, and the current goal.

Reporting system and format:

- **Mayor Sign-Off** – The group recommended an email be generated to prompt County Mayors to follow a link to verify the APR as opposed to maintaining log in. The current process requires that a County Mayor setup an account in Re-TRAC, maintain their login information, and then when prompted, sign-in to approve the APR. County Mayors often rubber-stamp the APR report with little review, which adds little value from their perspective. Often the County Mayor sign-off has to be accompanied by an Executive Summary which constitutes additional work for the author, so this change could simplify the process.
- **Transition date** – The calendar year (CY) for the data should be added to the transactional report and not the date of transaction.
- **Local Reporting** – Add a section that separates out local reporting from private.
- **Character Count Limitation** – There is an issue with the current character limit for some narrative fields, this can restrict users from inputting all the required information.
- **Multiple Users** – The current Re-TRAC system allows for multiple users to login at the same time, but for changes to be made one user may make them, save the changes, and then the other users have to log out of the system and log back in before being able to view the changes. The working group would like a Google document type that allows real-time updates for shared users.
- **Report Authors** – One idea discussed was the ability for city, county and unincorporated areas to have individual logins, which would allow them to add information (They could just add disposal and recycling numbers).
- **Finances** – Working group members identified the need for city financial data and chart of accounts, not just county.
- **Goal Improvement Suggestions** – The working group voiced a range of suggestions on possibly improving the goal; TDEC should not have a goal but instead focus on the best use of funds; aspirational goals; and qualitative goals were amongst the items recommended.
- **Report Format** – The current format of the recycling, diversion and disposal reports are good.

- **Beta Testing of Updated Reporting tools** – Mr. McCormick discussed the need for working group beta testers – approximate target date is July – August 2018. The Department will reach out to the working group members during this phase.

Discussion on “Under local control”:

- “Under your control” – There was substantial discussion around what Solid Waste Directors consider to be “under their control”. This ranged from anything the county has financial control to the things the county specifically collects and touches. Either way, there will be extreme diversity to what local or county governments consider under their control. Items that need to be considered include:
 - Can we have more options to show where control factors are and where the materials were sent? Who, what, when and how did x send to y?
 - What is the definition:
 - What we touch and cost to the program?
 - Convenience Centers
 - Franchises
 - Contracts
 - Curbside Programs
 - Point of Collection
 - Other services budgeted for and provided financially
 - What about other departments who pay for contracted services?
 - School board passes its own budget for their control.
 - They are responsible for their own waste.
 - It would be difficult to capture others who manage their own contracts.
 - Should TDEC separate out sectors?
 - It will be difficult.
 - Sometimes the collection is all lumped together.
 - There are many different approaches to “under local government control” across the state. It will not be feasible for the Department to calculate 95 different ways and times.
 - Local governments should know their disposal costs.
 - Local governments do not want to report numbers quarterly to the Department, just annual totals.

Current and Future Goal:

Goal – The working group discussed the current status of the goal and what a future goal may look like so that any effort to modify the reported disposal, recycling and diversion data will be useful in measuring possible future goals. Some brought up the need to update the goal, and asked about “no goal” states. Several solid waste directors felt that recycling and diversion will continue to increase with or without a goal. Additionally, there

were recommendations that the Department be more aspirational in its goal or allow for the goal to be set by each county as opposed to a statewide goal. As was identified during the “Under your control” discussion, there was significant variety in determining the best step forward for updating the goal for TN.

Data – Can the Department relieve the need for local governments to collect private sector data when considering a new goal? The working group felt that the local governments know their numbers very well, but know the private sector numbers are incorrect. Some have good data but others do not. Until a new goal is set, most regions need to report private sector numbers to demonstrate achievement of the goal.

Breaking out residential, commercial, and industrial – Based on the discussion provided by the county representatives, assigning sectors is possible but challenging because their collection routes sometime contain multiple sectors. TDEC is currently determining the best process for evaluating the viability of sector based reporting and will provide an update at the next TWSDA meeting or in interim communications.

Grant Funding – Additionally, the working group presented ideas about tying the goal to qualifying for state funding and not statutorily required. Instead say in your grants “By accepting this funding you will have to “increase, and set goals” to receive the funding.

Next Action Steps:

- TDEC to consider additional comments regarding the qualitative narrative reporting portion of the Annual Progress Report.
- TDEC to accept working group members’ feedback on APR qualitative narratives through April 1.
- TDEC to continue to work with Working Group on whether the current goal and quantitative approach is the best approach for the state.

Fifth Meeting
TDEC Cookeville Environmental Field Office
May 31, 2018

The Objective 1 & Objective 8 Working Group held its fourth meeting on May 31, 2018 at the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation's (TDEC) Environmental Field Office located in Cookeville, TN. The purpose of the meeting was for TDEC to provide the working group with an overview of a more streamlined quantitative data format for the Annual Progress Report (APR), which incorporated previous working group preliminary feedback. For more information on Objective 1, please visit <https://www.tn.gov/environment/program-areas/solid-waste/2015-2025-solid-waste-management-plan/objective-1.html>.

Working group members in attendance (includes other TDEC staff in attendance):

Seth McCormick (Seth.McCormick@tn.gov), TDEC-Division of Solid Waste Management
Matthew Taylor (Matthew.K.Taylor@tn.gov), TDEC-Office of Policy and Sustainable Practices
Shannon Jones (Shannon.A.Jones@tn.gov), TDEC-Division of Solid Waste Management
Caleb Powell (Caleb.Powell@tn.gov), TDEC-Division of Solid Waste Management
Mac Nolen (mnolen@rutherfordcountyttn.gov), Rutherford County
Nancy Zion (nancyz@williamson-tn.org), Williamson County
Joey Smith (jsmith@murfreesborotn.gov), City of Murfreesboro
Keith Street (kstreet@putnamcountyttn.gov), Putnam County
David Ashburn (dashburn@putnamcountyttn.gov), Putnam County

Purpose of the Meeting:

- Review and comment on the updates to the quantitative data format in the APR and how this contributes and is considered with respect to the waste reduction and diversion goal.
- Update on the status of the RFP for an APR data management vendor.

TDEC Environmental Consultant Seth McCormick provided a presentation that targeted three specific areas related to the APR and goal:

- **APR Vendor Request for Proposal Status:** The RFP status presentation was primarily an update from Seth McCormick on the approval processes and desired components and functionality included in the new system. During this portion of the presentation there were some questions as to the timing of the process. The Department is currently in the cost-proposal phase and will have an executed contract by July 1. By late summer to early-Fall the working group members will be given the opportunity to beta-test the new system and its components. Following beta-testing, Materials Management will begin conducting outreach and APR workshops in late Fall, with the expectation that the reporting system will be in place for use by January 1, 2019.

- **Quantitative data** – The Department prepared two documents proposing slightly revised structure to the annual report, to fully capture sector based recycling, diversion and disposal data. The sectors discussed by the two reports are, ICI and Residential, each is discussed in more detail below:
 - **Industrial, Commercial and Institutional (ICI)** – This proposed reporting structure is very similar to the current structure that report authors have completed since 2012 Re-TRAC Connect. The intent of this report is to capture data from entities that recover materials based on county of origin. While recovered materials facilities may also capture residential programs, this report is specific to ICI generated materials.
 - **Residential Programs** – The Department originally had residential only services provided at the local government level in the proposed reporting structure. The data requested by this proposed reporting structure is similar to the ICI format, but asks for more specific information from local governments. Following the presentation of this proposed reporting structure the working group voiced concerns regarding the difficult of gathering this data. Since each local government provides varying degrees of services, which includes services to entities other than residential sectors, the group decided to name this report “Services Provided” instead of “Residential Programs”.

During the discussion regarding proposed changes to the APR reporting structure (discussed above), the Department also sought input on what additional information could be incorporated into the annual report. The Department is exploring options on how to best supplement local government’s annual reports with other data already reported to the Department, such as Class I and III/IV landfill origin reports. With respect to landfill origin reports, each landfill is required to report to the Department on a quarterly or annual basis. This data is used to calculate the 25% waste reduction and diversion goal. Starting January 2019, the Department will automatically populate the disposal information for the local government to review and comment on, if needed.

- **Reporting system feature recommendations:**
 - One of the items that came up in discussion was that there is confusion surrounding the various sector definitions and what type of businesses and operations are included within each respective sector. A feature in the new platform that could address this issue would be a hover-over definition function, so when users hovered their mouse over a specific term it would pop-up a reference (when completing the report, both internally and for stakeholders).
 - Similarly, conversion factors should be easily accessible in reporting platform OR the platform should have auto-convert features. The working group members noted that there are multiple conversion equations available online and these

- sometimes differ from TDEC's conversion equations. The discrepancy in conversion formulas and opportunity to standardize an approach speaks to another way in which TDEC and Solid Waste Directors can continue to work to improve data quality.
- Based on the working group's discussion, TDEC realized that some report authors miscategorize diversion reports as "Other" in the Recycling Reports or accidentally double-report in separate diversion reports. One solution proposed by the working group to resolve miscategorizations like these, could be avoided by combining recycling and diversion reports into a single report like Re-TRAC Classic.
 - The working group continued to discuss the terminology "under local-government control". Through discussion it was determined that a more accurate terminology to describe exactly what TDEC is seeking to capture is "services funded and provided by the local government" (not including private haulers that may utilize your facilities). For instance, Nashville only controls 18% of trash/recycling/diversion services and would only be able to report the services they provide.

After receiving verbal feedback, Mr. McCormick requested that any feedback relating to the APR two documents or the reporting system be submitted to TDEC within the next two weeks, or by June 15.

Next Action Steps:

- TDEC to receive feedback and incorporate members' feedback into the documents.
- TDEC to share newly revised documents to working group members for finalization.
- TDEC to schedule a working group meeting in August/September to go over the Objective 1 goal timeline, research and setup beta users for the system.