



Preserving Resources,  
Preventing Waste

# The New Jersey WasteWise Bulletin

Newsletter of the New Jersey WasteWise Business Network – Spring, 2017  
*WasteWise...improving your bottom line and the environment  
through waste reduction, recycling and recycled product procurement.*

## 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of NJ Recycling Act Arrives!

Proving that time does indeed fly by, we will soon be celebrating the 30th anniversary of New Jersey's mandatory recycling law, which was the first mandatory recycling law in the United States and established New Jersey as a national leader in recycling. The law, which was enacted by Governor Tom Kean on April 20, 1987, reshaped how New Jersey residents, businesses and institutions viewed and managed the waste paper, old corrugated cardboard and used bottles and cans that they generated daily. Among other things, the Recycling Act required New Jersey's twenty-one counties to develop recycling plans that mandated the recycling of at least three designated recyclable materials, in addition to leaves. County recycling plans were also required to designate the strategy to be utilized for the collection, marketing and disposition of designated recyclable materials. Other provisions of the Recycling Act required municipalities to adopt an ordinance based upon their county's recycling plan.

Initially, the Recycling Act called for the recycling of 15% of the municipal solid waste stream in the first year of the program followed by the recycling of 25% of the municipal solid waste stream thereafter. (That goal was more than doubled through legislation enacted in 1992 (P.L. 1992, c.167), amending the 1987 Recycling Act with a new challenge to recycle 50% of the municipal solid waste stream and 60% of the overall waste stream.)

The impact of the Recycling Act was felt almost immediately as recycling tonnage increased dramatically after the enactment of this legislation. In 1986, 1.1 million tons of material was recycled in New Jersey, while in 1988 that number jumped up to 5.4

million tons. While waste generation also increased during this period, the total tons recycled in New Jersey increased significantly each year as recycling became a way of life in New Jersey.

There will be a special ceremony commemorating the signing of the Recycling Act at this year's annual meeting of the Association of New Jersey Recyclers on April 12, 2017. Please join us at the event! To register, visit [www.anjr.com](http://www.anjr.com).

### Editor's Perspective: Memories of 1987

I started working at the NJDEP's Recycling Office one month before the Recycling Act was signed into law in April of 1987 and remember those early days well. It was all very exciting, as recycling was the hot issue of the day at that time. There were many newspaper articles and TV and radio news features about the need to recycle and about the new recycling law. The NJDEP received many phone calls and letters (email had not yet reached the masses or state offices) about the recycling law during this period. While most were positive, a few people complained that the law was asking too much of them. As time went by, recycling started to become the norm as people got accustomed to separating their recyclables from the trash. New Jersey's recycling law became a model for other states to follow and New Jersey's municipal, county and state recycling officials led the way on what became a national recycling movement. SR

**News Flash** - Free monthly NRC recycling webinars available at <http://nrcrecycles.org/>

## Did You Know...

- Just Salad restaurants in New York City implemented a reusable salad bowl program that allows customers to buy reusable salad bowls at a discount and thereafter receive free salad toppings when using their bowl. The program has been a huge success as the company has sold over 500,000 bowls, which in turn keeps 75,000 pounds of disposable bowls out of the waste stream annually.
- Thanks in part to a grant from the NJDEP, the Town of Secaucus has purchased a food waste composter that will be used at the town's high school.
- ReCork recycles natural bottle corks through a network of collection centers. The corks are made into yoga blocks and traction pads. For further information, visit <https://recork.org/>.
- A London based startup has developed a process to recycle chicken feathers from the poultry industry! The feathers are broken down in a patent pending process into a product the company is calling Aeropowder, which can be made into a variety of biodegradable products, including an effective thermal insulator.
- Call2Recycle® is a nonprofit product stewardship recycling program for rechargeable batteries (and cellphones) with 30,000 collection sites throughout North America. To find a collection site near you, visit Call2Recycle at <http://www.call2recycle.org/locator/>.
- The NJDEP and Rutgers University teamed up to create the Recycling Coordinator's Toolkit, which contains various tools that can help you enhance your program. Check it out at <http://www.cpe.rutgers.edu/recycling-coordinator-toolkit/>.
- There are now 441 New Jersey communities participating in the Sustainable Jersey program. This represents 78% of the state's municipalities and 88% of the state's population. Get more information at <http://www.sustainablejersey.com/>.
- The NJDEP's recycling webpage contains a list of over forty helpful weblinks for organizations that pertain to the recycling community. Visit online at <http://www.nj.gov/dep/dshw/recycling/educationandlinks.html>.

## The Paperless Society

The idea of the "paperless society" has been around since 1978 and was meant to describe a society in which paper documents have been replaced by electronic communication and storage. With the rise of the personal computer in the 1980s, this concept seemed quite plausible. But, as we all know, the paperless society did not materialize and for the most part the idea of a paperless society is no longer even discussed. What is discussed today, however, is the wise use of paper. Wise use suggests streamlining systems through efficient tools (i.e. online platforms) to minimize unnecessary use and waste. Such an approach not only results in less waste paper to manage through recycling programs, but also procurement cost savings for companies and organizations.

Some strategies that should be explored to reduce office waste paper generation include: 1) taking notes on a laptop or tablet; 2) using a shared network drive or cloud-based program to share documents; 3) circulating materials in advance of meetings and letting participants know you will not be providing hard copies. Also, encouraging meeting attendees to print only what they will need; 4) for conferences and events - providing online registration and distributing meeting agendas and materials online or via email; 5) sending newsletters and information via an email distribution list; and 6) only printing page(s) you need, instead of an entire document, and increasing margins and reducing font size.

## Earth Day Opportunities

Earth Day (4/22/17) is a great time to highlight your waste reduction and recycling program. Let your staff, residents and others know about the benefits of your program and about how they can help. The use of displays, lunchtime recycling presentations, and promotional giveaway items are proven ways to reach your audience. [www.earthdayNJ.org](http://www.earthdayNJ.org)

### ***New Jersey WasteWise Business Network***

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*<http://www.nj.gov/dep/dshw/recycling/wastewise/brbn03.htm>*

*[www.epa.gov/wastewise](http://www.epa.gov/wastewise)*

*Editor: Steven Rinaldi - Printed on Recycled Paper*