

Illinois Statewide Recycling Needs Assessment Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

Monday, March 10, 2025, 12:00 pm CT

WebEx Webinar

1. Welcome: Roll Call

- a. Attendees: John Pausma, Tomas Vujovic, Aaron Harmon, Daphne Hulse, Lisa Disbrow, Joshua Connell, Sadzi Oliva, Marta Keane, Anthony Tindall, Brad Cole, Christina Seibert, Cole Stollard, Alec Laird, Andrea Densham, Seema Keshav, Frank Pettis, Donovan Griffith, Elizabeth Sheaffer, Carol Patterson, Machele Henderson
- b. Not in attendance: Nicole Willett, Becky Tracy, Kristina LoRusso, Rod Kleckler, Darnell Tingle, Madeline Norris, John Rost
- c. A quorum was present.
- d. Illinois EPA staff attending: Cassandra Clark, Jacki Cooperider, Victoria Slayton
- e. Open seats on the Advisory Council include one representative of each: a compost collection and processing facility (vacated by Denise Macias); a retailer (vacated by Bill Dolak); and a producer of consumer products (vacated by Neil Menezes).

2. Meeting Minutes

- a. December 9 meeting minutes were reviewed. Motion by Anthony Tindall, second by Elizabeth Sheaffer; all in favor, minutes were approved.

3. Illinois EPA Updates

- a. Jacki Cooperider announced that Eunomia Research & Consulting was selected as the consultant for completion of the needs assessment on March 7. A contract has not yet been finalized with Eunomia.
- b. Due to the resignation of Neil Menezes from the Advisory Council, the Vice Chair position is currently vacant. Nominations for a new Vice Chair should be sent to Christina Seibert and Cassandra Clark by March 31 and a selection will be made at the June meeting.

4. Old Business – Update from Oregon DEQ Regarding Packaging EPR Planning and Implementation (Arianne Sperry)

- a. Oregon's law is titled the Plastic Pollution and Recycling Modernization Act (RMA) and was passed in 2021, with implementation beginning in 2022. The program will start July 1, 2025. The program plan from Circular Action Alliance has recently been approved. Arianne provided an overview of the process to develop the law and its implementation status:
 - Oregon's 2050 Vision and Framework for Action for Materials Management, is a driving guidance for the law. Oregon focuses on all parts of the lifecycle of products because many environmental impacts occur upstream prior to consumer involvement (through extraction, design, and production). Their

focus is on recycling the correct materials, protecting the environment, and reducing the impact of materials used.

- The RMA was driven by needs to reduce public confusion over what can be recycled, respond to unstable global markets, address unequal access to recycling collection in rural areas and small communities, repair erosion of public trust that recycling was really happening, increase transparency about where recyclables are ending up, address costs for the system being shouldered by ratepayers, and reduce harm to communities outside the US.
- The Recycling Steering Committee, made up of diverse stakeholders, worked from 2018 to 2020 to develop a framework for a strong recycling system to restore public trust and optimize environmental benefits – this was the basis for the RMA introduced in 2021.
- Elements of the RMA include shared responsibility, expanded recycling services to rural areas (communities of 4,000+ must recycle all materials on the statewide collection list), assurance that materials are responsibly recycled, and education and outreach about what is recyclable.
- The RMA is a comprehensive reform of Oregon’s recycling system, not just packaging EPR, with requirements for recycling processors to obtain permits, local governments to expand recycling services and communication to residents, and producers to fund MRF operations and system improvements. It is not a full EPR law – it maintains what works and funds what is lacking. Each program is different in the states that have passed packaging EPR legislation, this is what works for Oregon.
- The program covers single-family, multi-family, and commercial generators.
- MRFs will need to secure new permits, meet performance standards, pay living wages, and use responsible end markets; they will be compensated by the PRO for their operating costs and receive a contamination bounty.
- A newly formed Oregon Recycling System Advisory Council will advise DEQ and the PRO.
- Covered products include packaging, printing and writing paper, and food service ware. Covered products include recyclable and non-recyclable materials. The Uniform Statewide Collection List is the materials that local governments must collect curbside – the goal is to recycle better, not just more; this list is evolving, and clamshells, empty aerosols, plastic lids, etc. may be added with a future plan amendment. The PRO must collect additional materials not conducive to commingled collection but that are recyclable through a network of collection points, including plastic bags, block expanded polystyrene, glass bottles and jars, bulky plastic containers, shredded paper, aluminum foil and pressed containers, and lids.
- RMA goes beyond recycling to make meaningful changes in social equity, recognize environmental impacts, eco-modulate producer fees, and fund a waste prevention and reuse program.
- The first needs assessment on collection needs had to be done by June 2023; at that time, some program elements and covered materials had not been defined. As a result, local governments didn’t know what they were going to need without having a better program definition. It was an iterative process

with base information being collected, then a second survey to provide more detail to CAA, and there is still more information to be collected – many touchpoints are needed to get all the information.

- Current activities include recruiting producers to join CAA, with pre-registration due by March 31; setting the producer fee schedule in June; and continued permitting of MRFs by DEQ.
- The program will begin July 1 and ramp up starting then; DEQ views it as a dial, not a switch, as investments and funding starts to flow.
- The program plan identifies the start-up budget to average \$183 million/year for the first 2 ½ program years (mid-2025 through end of 2027).

b. Questions from Advisory Council members were posed to Arianne:

- How long did it take to get to this point? DEQ started in 2018 with the steering committee and consensus framework. DEQ's goal was to be steady with implementation and recognized it will not be perfect on day one – the program will be in place for a very long time, and it will evolve and iterate.
- What are the milestones for changes during implementation? The program plan has a schedule of investments for local governments, organized by priority adopted in administrative rule; priority is to local governments who need funding to come into compliance with pre-existing requirements for access to recycling, then extending into the RMA program.
- What investments will be made during start-up? This will include trucks, containers, and depots / drop-off locations. Smaller communities are not required to have on-route collection but may request to have that funded. Community investments will be made through funding agreements with CAA. Eligible investments are defined in statute and rules, and lower priority requests may be deferred by CAA depending on budget available.
- Can you review the program cost of \$183 million? It is an average annual cost for 2025 through 2027. The program plan front-loads costs, so DEQ expects costs will decrease for the next program plan. Funding investment is expected to lead to efficient and effective operations. Actual spending may vary by 20% before a plan amendment would be needed.
- How has DEQ found it best to coordinate with producers? DEQ has partnered with PSI on webinars and outreach to inform and connect with producers and make them aware of their responsibilities. They have worked with trade associations and industry groups also. CAA also has a role in reaching out to and registering producers, with CAA requested to be the first point of contact before DEQ needing to follow up with lagging producers.
- What are the performance standards to confirm that the program is successful? DEQ will provide reports to the legislature several times (e.g., a 2029 contamination update to indicate progress against goals that are being set now); CAA has also set several targets in its program plan. Performance targets were not generally established in the RMA.
- How will the MRF infrastructure be modernized? The private sector has developed a lot of capacity already, but facilities were built when the material mix was different. There are some new MRFs being developed also with

modern sorting technology. Performance standards will ramp up over time, and there may be some specialization by MRFs to operate most effectively such as by doing primary and secondary sorts or focus on specific types of materials.

- How is CAA working with the MRFs, and will they utilize existing infrastructure? CAA is required to pay fees to the MRFs for operations and can choose to make additional investments into the MRF infrastructure, for example to on-ramp additional materials into curbside collection and manage it at the MRFs. DEQ is not part of those discussions.

5. Questions and Comments from Council Members

- a. There were no additional questions from Council members.

6. Public Comment Period

- a. A comment was provided inquiring if the Eunomia contract will include a CPA firm as part of their team or be selected by IEPA separately. IEPA requested that the question be sent to them after the meeting for review and follow-up. (Note: follow up after the meeting resolved that the CPA firm will be contracted with IEPA independent of Eunomia and is not part of the Eunomia project team.)

7. Next Meeting

- a. June 9, 12-1:30 pm CT via WebEx
- b. This meeting will ideally include a presentation from Eunomia on their scope of work, schedule, and opportunities for our involvement.
- c. Beginning with the June meeting, the Advisory Council will meet monthly and may shorten to a 1-hour length.

8. Adjournment

- a. The meeting adjourned at 1:10 pm CT; motion by Lisa Disbrow, second by Brad Cole.