



Council on Recycling



March 25, 2015

Governor Walker
Members of Wisconsin Assembly and Senate
State Capitol
Madison, WI 53708

RE: AB-21/SB-21 Proposed Budget – Reduced or Eliminated Funding for Recycling, Waste Reduction and Solid Waste Research Initiatives

Dear Governor Walker and State Legislators,

The Associated Recyclers of Wisconsin (AROW), Council on Recycling (COR), Solid Waste Association of North America-Badger Chapter (SWANA) and Wisconsin Counties Solid Waste Management Association (WCSWMA) **oppose and urge you to reconsider the following reductions or eliminations in funding from the Environmental Management Account:**

- **Reduction in Recycling Grants Available to Local Governments (\$4 million)**
- **Elimination in funding for UW Extension Solid & Hazardous Waste Education Center (SHWEC) (\$394,100)**
- **Elimination in funding for UW Solid Waste Research & Experiments (\$156,100)**

The source of funding, as listed above, is not through tax dollars, but rather through the per ton recycling and environmental fees assessed at Wisconsin landfills. Users at landfills, from residents to businesses to municipalities, pay a nearly \$13 per ton fee for every ton landfilled, \$9.64 of which is deposited into the Environmental Management Account. In fact, the non-partisan Legislative Fiscal Bureau estimates that “approximately 88% of revenue to the Environmental Management Account is...received from solid waste tipping fees” (LFB 2015).

Of particular note is the \$4 million reduction in financial assistance to local government. This money helps keep the cost of collecting and transporting recyclables, from households to processors and manufacturers, affordable. Wisconsinites are avid recyclers with more than 85% in support of the state laws governing recycling (DNR 2011). Continued strong public support underscores the importance of maintaining state investment in local government recycling programs. The proposed cut of nearly twenty-two percent (22%) falls on top of a forty percent (40%) reduction in 2011. **The result would be a cumulative reduction of over 50% in just 5 years’ time.** These cuts pose a risk to recycling programs across the state and pose a greater risk to those Wisconsin businesses that rely on recyclables as raw materials for production.

According to an informational paper, “Recycling Means Business: The Critical Link between Wisconsin’s Economic Growth and Recycling,” Wisconsin has a successful and well-established multi-billion dollar system for collecting and processing recyclables (AROW Resources 2012). A Department of Natural Resources study estimated the positive economic impact of recycling in Wisconsin at over \$6 billion. When recycling is successful and sustainable, we all benefit from the jobs created, products made from recyclables and water and energy saved.

Wisconsinites love to recycle and we want to ensure that remains a constant. Wisconsin businesses, such as paper mills and foundries, find economic success when using recyclables and we wish to see continued economic growth. Recycling and waste reduction research and education underpin the entire system. And, Wisconsin landfill users have paid for recycling grants to local governments and student research programs through the UW Solid Waste Research Program, as well as the community/business support, research and education through UW-Extension SHWEC.

SHWEC provides no-cost direct technical assistance and research-based education for preventing pollution and reducing waste to businesses, farms, citizens, local officials, and state agencies statewide. In short, SHWEC helps real people with real life issues and opportunities find real solutions. In 2014 alone, SHWEC specialists directly delivered technical assistance, training and education to over 3,500 people across the state. Additionally, their web-based resources were accessed over 32,000 times during 2014.

We again strongly urge you to restore all funding.

Endorsing Organizations

Associated Recyclers of Wisconsin is a professional association with members from local government, businesses and non-profit groups that provides statewide proactive leadership on waste reduction and recycling through education, advocacy, collaboration, programs and services.

Contact person: President Meleesa Johnson, Marathon County Solid Waste, 715-446-3101 X104
meleesa.johnson@co.marathon.wi.us

Solid Waste Association of North America- Badger Chapter has more than 100 members in Wisconsin, providing information, training programs, and networking opportunities to solid waste professionals and sharing ideas and solutions to better manage municipal waste.

Contact person: President Chad Doverspike, Brown County Port & Resource Recovery, 920-492-4950
Doverspike_cc@co.brown.wi.us

Wisconsin Counties Solid Waste Management Association works with all counties to promote effective and environmentally sound waste management systems and resource recovery efforts.

Contact person: Interim Chairperson: John Welch, Dane County Public Works, 608-267-8815,
Welch@countyofdane.com

Wisconsin Council on Recycling authorized in s. 287.22 Wis. Stat., consists of industry, business and local government representatives appointed by the Governor to advise the Governor, Legislature and state agencies on solid waste reduction, recovery and recycling policy.

Contact person: Chairman, Rick Meyers, City of Milwaukee Resource Recovery Program Manager, 414-286-2334
Rick.Meyers@milwaukee.gov

CC: Members of AROW, COR, SWANA & WCSWMA; Office of the Governor, Office of the Secretary of the DNR