



Annual Report

NERC-NEWMOA Joint Strategic Action Plan

Prepared by Lynn Rubinstein, NERC Executive Director & Terri Goldberg, NEWMOA Executive Director
July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021

Introduction

In June 2017, the NERC and NEWMOA Boards of Directors entered into a Joint Strategic Action Plan to further action on matters of mutual concern. In the fall of 2019, that Plan was updated and expanded to reflect current priorities and activities: [NERC-NEWMOA Joint Strategic Action Plan](#). Every year NERC and NEWMOA jointly develop a workplan that relates to the priorities outlined in the Joint Strategic Plan. We are pleased to share the remarkable progress that has been made in the fourth year of the joint initiative. After the close-out of each fiscal year (July 1 to June 30), the organizations issue an Annual Report to share their accomplishments. The following outlines joint accomplishments during that period.

Priorities for Action

The latest Joint Strategic Action Plan identified the following key areas of shared interest:

- Food scrap reduction, recovery, and management
- Recyclables collection strategies and impacts on manufacturing/end-users
- Increasing the use of recycled content in products
- Product stewardship
- Climate change and impacts on the recycling and solid waste infrastructure
- Waste tires
- Construction & demolition (C & D) materials
- Emerging contaminants in the solid waste stream
- Bottle bill coordination

This joint initiative has been especially helpful at expanding knowledge and supporting action throughout the region. The NERC and NEWMOA Boards are proud to support this project.

Josh Kelly, Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation

Additional priorities that NERC and NEWMOA adopted since the most recent Strategic Action Plan was approved include:

- Household hazardous waste
- Environmental benefits calculators

The Plan includes short and long-term strategies for each of these important challenges. A summary of fourth-year accomplishments under each topic area are provided below.

TOPIC: Food Scraps Reduction, Recovery, & Management

Task: Joint Food Recovery Workgroup

Accomplishments:

- Planned and held three meetings with an average of 15 participants/meeting from state programs and EPA
- Prepared and distributed notes
- Updated a [food waste calculator](#) spreadsheet and posted on NEWMOA's website

Lead organization: NEWMOA. Josh Kelly, VT DEC is the Workgroup Chair.

Task: Webinars

Accomplishments:

- Planned, promoted, held webinars, and posted recordings and slides on NERC and NEWMOA's websites:
 - "Anaerobic Digestions Resource for Farms" (378 registrants)
 - "Teaching Practical Strategies for Reducing Wasted Food Through Community Events" (821 registrants)
 - "Virtual ReCook Café" (647 registrants)
 - "De-packaging and Commercial Composting - An Integrated System for Organics Recycling" (900 registrants)
 - "Strategies for Collecting Residential Food Waste" (800 registrants)
- Planned and promoted webinar on "Growing the Food Upcycling Economy", held in July 2021
- Began planning additional food recovery webinars for fall and winter 2021 and beyond

Lead organizations: NERC and NEWMOA shared responsibilities.

TOPIC: Recyclables Collection Strategies & Impacts on Manufacturing/End-users

Task: Regional Recycling Markets Committee

Accomplishments:

- Planned and held nine meetings with an average of 18 participants/meeting from state agencies and NERC Advisory members
- Prepared and distributed notes and invited guest presenters.

Lead organization: NERC. Chaz Miller, NERC Board member, is the Committee Chair.

Task: Publications

Accomplishments:

- Published three updates on expansion of announced paper recycling capacity:
 - [Summary of Announced Increased Capacity to User Recycled Paper - Updated September 2020](#)
 - [Summary of Announced Increased Capacity to the Use Recycled Paper - Updated January 2021](#)

Our monthly updates on markets for recyclables along with presentations from end markets and MRF operators is an invaluable asset for committee members as we discuss how to improve recycling markets. The committee has produced reports on expanded market capacity for recycled paper and recycled plastic and quarterly reports on the value of a ton of recyclables at MRFs in the northeast. These reports are regularly quoted in news stories about recycling.

Chaz Miller, Ex Officio Board member, NERC

- [Summary of Announced Increased Capacity to use Recycled Paper Updated May 2021](#)
- Conducted quarterly surveys of MRFs in the region and published reports on the results:
 - [Blended Value of a MRF Ton in the Northeast August 2020](#)
 - [Blended Value of a MRF Ton in the Northeast November 2020](#)
 - [Blended Value of a MRF Ton in the Northeast - February 2021](#)
 - [Blended Value of a MRF Ton in the Northeast April 2021](#)
- Updated: [Recycling Businesses in the NERC Region that Process or Use Post-Consumer Recycled Content “Blue Bin” Materials after MRF Processing](#)
- Published many NERC Email Bulletin articles and press releases about publications and distributed on listservs

Lead organization: NERC

Task: Joint Webinars

Accomplishments:

Planned, promoted, and held webinars and posted recordings and slides on NERC and NEWMOA’s websites:

- “State Actions to Address Recycling Market Changes” (609 registrants)
- “International Requirements on Plastic Scrap” (for the NERC and NEWMOA Boards and state program staff only, 34 registrants)

Lead organizations: NEWMOA

NERC organized the following webinars on related topics independently from NEWMOA and shared the announcements with NEWMOA to promote with its members:

- Plastic Film Recycling
- End-Markets Recycling Markets in 2021

TOPIC: Increasing the Use of Recycled Content in Products

Task: Workshop on using recycled content in road and infrastructure projects

Accomplishments:

- Planned and held a virtual workshop on November 16 – 17, 2020 about using recycled content in road and infrastructure projects, including glass and plastic (90 registrants)
- Posted PowerPoint slides on the NERC and NEWMOA websites

Lead organization: NERC

Task: Post-Consumer Mandatory Minimum Recycled Content Model Legislation Workgroup

Accomplishments:

- NERC and NEWMOA launched a Post-Consumer Mandatory Minimum Recycled Content Model Legislation Workgroup to develop model legislation for plastic food and beverage containers and plastic film in May 2020
- Planned and held 10 monthly meetings with an average of 9 participants from state programs and invited guest presenters
- Prepared and distributed meeting notes and documents supporting the Workgroup’s efforts
- NERC staff presented at the NERC fall 2020 Conference on the regional initiative as well as to Sustainable Packaging Coalition Next Markets Committee

- Prepared a spreadsheet summary of existing state post-consumer recycled (PCR) content legislation and updated as needed
- Prepared and submitted a joint NERC and NEWMOA letter to the Plastic Pact regarding biodegradable and compostable plastics
- Prepared a draft of model legislation for mandatory recycled content in plastic containers and film to support Workgroup deliberations
- Arranged for guest presenters

Lead organizations: NERC and NEWMOA shared responsibilities equally. Cathy Jamieson, VT DEC is the Workgroup Chair.

Task: Joint Webinars

Accomplishments:

Planned, promoted, and held webinars and posted recordings and slides on NERC’s and NEWMOA’s websites:

- “State and Local Laws on Minimum Recycled Content” (650 registrants)
- “Voluntary Initiatives Driving the Use of Minimum Recycled Content in Products and Packaging” (460 registrants)

Lead organization: NERC

TOPIC: Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)

Task: Joint Northeast EPR Network

Accomplishments:

- Planned and held five regular meetings with an average of 18 participants from state programs and non-governmental organizations.
- Prepared and distributed notes

Lead organization: NEWMOA. Tom Metzner, Connecticut DEEP is the Network Chair

Task: Joint Webinar (also partnered with the Product Stewardship Institute (PSI))

Accomplishment:

Planned, promoted, and held webinar and posted recording and slides on NERC’s and NEWMOA’s websites:

- “The Spectrum of Approaches to U.S. Packaging EPR: From Reimbursement to Full Responsibility” (242 registrants)

Lead organization: NEWMOA

Task: Publication

Accomplishments:

- Drafted, finalized, posted, and publicized: [“EPR for Packaging and Paper Products FAQ”](#)

Lead organizations: NERC and NEWMOA shared responsibilities equally.

TOPIC: Climate Change and Impacts on the Recycling and Solid Waste Infrastructure

Task: Joint Workgroup and West Coast Climate and Materials Management Forum

Accomplishments:

- Planned and held two Workgroup meetings for an average of eight participants from states programs
- Prepared and distributed notes
- Participated (NEWMOA only) in West Coast Climate and Materials Management Forum monthly meetings and shared information on their discussions with the Workgroup
- Held a joint virtual meeting of the Workgroup and the West Coast Forum in June 2020 (13 participants from the northeast state programs and EPR Network)

Lead organization: NEWMOA

Task: Webinar

Accomplishment:

Planned, promoted, and held a “Life Cycle Assessments” webinar and posted recordings and slides on NERC’s websites (NERC organized this webinar independently and shared with NEWMOA to invite its members to participate)

TOPIC: Waste Tires

Task: Publication and Workshop

Accomplishments:

- Prepared and published a report on state waste tire regulations fees, and program elements: [Overview of Tire Regulations in the Northeast States](#)
- Participated in a U.S. Tire Manufacturers Association virtual session on end-of-life uses of scrap tires in February 2021

Lead organization: NEWMOA

TOPIC: Emerging Contaminants in the Solid Waste Stream

Task: Science of PFAS Conference and Webinars

Accomplishments:

- Collaborated on planning the Science of PFAS Conference
- Rescheduled Conference to December 2020 due to COVID-19 pandemic; postponed again to March 2022
- Independently, NEWMOA organized and held a series of 11 webinars on PFAS topics starting in February 2021 through June 2021; topics and speakers were part of the original 2020 Conference agenda
- Reached out to 2020 Conference speakers to assess their interest in presenting in 2022
- Convened a Science of PFAS Conference Planning Committee meeting to initiate plans for the 2022 Conference; prepared and shared notes on the results of the meetings

Lead organization: NEWMOA

TOPIC: Bottle Bill Coordination

Task: Regional Bottle Bill Committee

Accomplishments:

- This group transitioned from a joint NERC-NEWMOA, state-members only, Workgroup to a NERC Committee that is open to state and private sector representation; the Committee anticipates occasional states-only meetings.

Lead organization: NERC

Task: Webinar

Accomplishment:

- Planned, promoted, and held a webinar on “Bottle Bill Best Management Practices” (324 registrants), and posted recordings and slides on NERC’s and NEWMOA’s websites:

Lead organization: NERC

Household Hazardous Waste (HHW)

Task: Joint Workgroup

Accomplishments:

- Formed Joint Workgroup on state HHW programs
- Planned and held three meetings for an average of nine participants from state programs
- Prepared and distributed notes on the meetings

Lead organization: NEWMOA. Mia Roethlein, VT DEC is the Workgroup Chair.

Task: Webinars

Accomplishments:

Planned, promoted, and held webinars and posted recordings and slides on NERC’s and NEWMOA’s websites:

- “Overview of Lithium Batteries, Their Uses, and Recycling” (1,027 registrants)
- “Examples of Actions by Waste Haulers and Storage and Processing Facilities to Reduce the Risk of Fires Associated with Lithium Batteries” (672 registrants)
- “Lithium Battery Recycling” (288 registrants)

Lead organization: NEWMOA

Topic: Environmental Benefits Calculators

Task: Webinar

Accomplishment:

- Planned, promoted, and held a webinar (911 registrants), and posted recordings and slides on NERC’s and NEWMOA’s websites.

Lead organization: NERC

TOPIC: Overall Coordination & Management

Tasks: Coordination and reporting on results

Accomplishments:

- Executive Directors spoke numerous times to develop materials and plan activities; exchanged numerous emails
- Prepared quarterly reports and shared with the NERC and NEWMOA Boards of Directors
- Prepared and distributed 2020 Annual Report on accomplishments and shared with the NERC and NEWMOA Boards and other state contacts
- Prepared annual workplans

Lead organizations: NERC and NEWMOA shared responsibilities equally.

Summary of Accomplishments

Especially given the extraordinary circumstances that resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic, and the universal need to adjust how to function as organizations, NERC and NEWMOA's overall achievements during the fourth year of our Joint Strategic Plan included:

- Joint Webinars:
 - Five organics and wasted food reduction and recovery webinars
 - Two markets for recycled materials webinars
 - Two recycled content standards and programs webinars
 - One on EPR for packaging and paper products webinar
 - One on bottle bill programs
 - One webinar on environmental benefits calculators webinar
 - Three on lithium batteries webinars
 - Total of 14 joint webinars with 7,805 registrants
- Other activities:
 - Plans for Science of PFAS Conference in March 2022
 - Publication of eight resources on markets for recyclables
 - Regional virtual workshop focused on recycled content in roadway projects
 - Publication of a document on EPR for packaging and paper products
 - Publication of a resource on state regulation of waste tires
 - Formation of a new Workgroup focused on household hazardous waste
 - Coordination of and support for six joint Workgroups or Committees with numerous virtual meetings
 - Regular reports for each groups' Board on the status of activities under the Joint Plan, in addition to an Annual Report
 - Regular, at least monthly calls of the NERC and NEWMOA Executive Directors to coordinate and plan activities

In FY 2021, NERC and NEWMOA built on the momentum that began in 2017 under the Joint Strategic Action Plan. Jointly planning training and information sharing events has resulted in unique and important educational opportunities for significant numbers of participants. We will continue to plan and hold joint webinars and other training activities in FY 2022.

The publication of joint documents was important in FY 2021, and both organizations look forward to continuing to publish ground-breaking information resources on critical issues related to EPR, climate change, and other topics.

None of the work outlined above would have been possible without the dedication and hard work of the NERC and NEWMOA Joint Workgroup members, including the Food Recovery Workgroup, the Regional Recycling Markets Committee, the Climate and Materials Workgroup, Recycled Content Legislation Workgroup, Household Hazardous Waste Workgroup, the Bottle Bill Committee, and the Regional EPR Network. Their engagement is critical to the success of these initiatives, and NERC and NEWMOA appreciate their ideas and hard work.

About NERC

The Northeast Recycling Council (NERC) is a multi-state non-profit organization whose programs emphasize source reduction, reuse, recycling, composting, environmentally preferable purchasing (EPP), and decreasing the toxicity of the solid waste stream in the 11-state region comprised of Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont. Its *mission* is to minimize waste, conserve natural resources, and advance a sustainable economy through facilitated collaboration and action. For more information, visit <https://nerc.org/>.

About NEWMOA

The Northeast Waste Management Officials' Association (NEWMOA) is a non-profit, non-partisan, interstate association whose membership is composed of the state environment agency programs that address pollution prevention, toxics use reduction, sustainability, materials management, hazardous waste, solid waste, emergency response, waste site cleanup, underground storage tanks, and related environmental challenges in Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, and Vermont. NEWMOA' mission is to provide a strategic forum for effectively solving environmental problems through collaborative regional initiatives that:

- Advance pollution prevention and sustainability
- Promote safer alternatives to toxic materials in products
- Identify and assess emerging contaminants
- Facilitate adaption to climate change and mitigate greenhouse gas sources
- Promote reuse and recycling of wastes and diversion of organics
- Support proper management of hazardous and solid wastes
- Facilitate clean-up of contaminant releases to the environment

For more information, visit www.newmoa.org.