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Report on Blended Commodity Values in the Northeast

Period covered April – June 2019

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Background

The Northeast Recycling Council (NERC) supports recycling market development and opportunities for improvements in its 11-state region: Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

Last year, in partnership with the Northeast Waste Management Officials' Association (NEWMOA), we formed a *Regional Recycling Markets Development Committee*. The Committee determined that having information about the value of commodities processed by the region's Materials Recovery Facilities (MRFs)¹ would be extremely helpful for assessing regional market trends and would serve as an educational tool for promoting improved residential recycling and participation. North Carolina's Department of Environmental Quality has been doing a similar survey for many years. The results have been invaluable to recyclers, MRFs, and also municipalities and state agencies. We anticipate the same benefits in our region.

We plan to conduct the survey on a quarterly basis moving forward and to publish those results, as well as trends.

Fifteen (15) publically-owned or operated MRFs in 10 states volunteered to be surveyed in July 2019 for the period covering April – June, 2019.² These MRFs will be surveyed on a quarterly basis. At no time will any individual company information be shared with anyone outside of NERC staff. No participating facilities will be identified and no state-specific data will be released.

We would like to recognize and thank RRS for its technical assistance.

¹ MRFs are a facility that receives, separates and prepares recyclable materials from the public for marketing to processors and end-user manufacturers.

² There are no MRFs in New Hampshire.

Survey Questions & Results

The survey included both annual questions and quarterly questions. For this report, the calendar year responses were for 2018, and the quarterly questions were for April – June 2019. The commodities upon which the survey focused were:

UBC (aluminum cans)
Steel Cans
PET (plastic #1)
HDPE Natural (plastic #2)
HDPE Colored (plastic #2)
Polypropylene (plastic #5)
#’s 3-7 Plastics
Bulky Rigid Plastics
OCC Grade #11 (corrugated cardboard)
Mixed Paper Grade #54
Aseptic and Gable-top Cartons (Grade #52)
Clear Glass Containers
Green Glass Containers
Brown Glass Containers
3 Mix Glass Containers
Residue

Percentage of Materials Marketed by Commodity

MRFs were asked to provide the average percentage of total outbound tons marketed, as well as the average value of each commodity sold in the previous quarter, as well as residue. NERC then used this data to develop the average commodity value of a ton of material.

Average Percentage of Outbound Tons Marketed per Commodity in 2018

UBC	0.72%
Steel Cans	2.34%
PET	3.08%
HDPE Natural	0.67%
HDPE Colored	0.93%
Polypropylene	0.89%
3-7 Plastic	2.41%
Bulky Rigids	0.72%
OCC Grade #11	24.4%
Mixed Paper Grade #54	27.97%
Aseptic and Gable-top Cartons (Grade #52)	0.05%
Clear Glass	4.41%
Green Glass	1.75%
Brown Glass	4.41%
3 Mix Glass	14.57%
Residue	12.19%
Total	101.51% ³

Average Commodity Value per Ton of Marketed Materials

MRFs were asked to provide the average value of each commodity for the previous quarter (April – June 2019). These values were then combined into a weighted average to reflect the average value per ton for recyclables marketed in the region.

Average commodity value per ton *with* residuals: \$45.83

Average commodity value per ton *without* residuals: \$51.65

³ Disparity over 100% is due to the way glass percentages was reported.

Gate Tipping Fees & Residual Processing Costs

The MRFs were also asked about their gate tipping fee⁴ for recycling and processing costs⁵ in calendar year 2018.

Average gate tipping fee per ton:

- \$38 for municipal (municipal with contracts)⁶
- \$48 for commercial or municipal without contracts⁷

Average processing cost per ton: \$82

⁴ Price paid by customer to bring materials into the MRF.

⁵ The cost to sort and prepare the commodities for sale.

⁶ The fee for municipalities that have a contract with the MRF to accept their materials.

⁷ The fee for non-residentially generated recyclable materials, or from a community without a contract with the MRF to accept their materials.