

Metropolitan Mayors Caucus Environment Committee Meeting
Recycling - Beyond Municipal Solid Waste Programs
March. 15, 2022, 10 to 11:30 a.m., online meeting

Municipal recycling programs strive to be effective in an economy that does not prioritize waste reduction. Product packaging confuses consumers, leading to contamination of the recycling stream. Markets for recyclable materials rise and fall depending on so many factors far beyond the reach of the municipal recycling bin. Businesses make their own decisions about whether to recycle materials, which leads to even more consumer confusion.

Join us for a conversation to discuss three programs that aim to address these larger recycling issues beyond the municipal recycling bin.

First, [The National Recycling Strategy: Part One of a Series on Building a Circular Economy](#) is focused on enhancing and advancing the national municipal solid waste (MSW) recycling system and identifies strategic objectives and stakeholder-led actions to create a stronger, more resilient, and cost-effective system. **Chris Newman of the U.S. EPA Materials Management Program** will describe the agency's national stakeholder engagement process and the resulting strategy for a circular economy that considers markets, recycling infrastructure, policies, and environmental justice.

Next, **Walter Willis of the Solid Waste Agency of Lake County (SWALCO)** and **Sydney Harris of the Product Stewardship Institute** will discuss the effort currently underway in Illinois (and other states) to pass extended producer responsibility (EPR) legislation for paper and packaging products. This proposed legislation would [make product manufacturers responsible](#) for their products and their packaging at the end of the product lifecycle. Two features of EPR policy are (1) shifting financial and management responsibility upstream to the manufacturer and away from the public sector; and (2) providing incentives to manufacturers to incorporate environmental considerations into the design of their products and packaging.

Finally, **Walter Willis** will provide an overview of the State law that empowers municipalities to implement a single hauler franchise for the commercial sector, much like most municipalities do with the residential sector. Mr. Willis will discuss how eight communities in Lake County have established commercial hauling franchises that have been extremely effective in reducing rates for waste and recycling service (Typically over 90% of businesses save approximately 20% or more over current costs.), increasing recycling participation rates to over 50% for businesses (compared to approximately 20% participation in non-franchise municipalities), eliminating expensive environmental fees, fuel surcharges and contamination fees, and reducing road wear and tear and greenhouse gases by going to a more efficient single hauler approach.