



Legislative Tool Kit



2007

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PROP & the Future of Recycling

The Professional Recyclers of Pennsylvania (PROP) is a professional organization of recycling, composting, and solid waste managers and is Pennsylvania's affiliate to the National Recycling Coalition (NRC).

In addition to its many outreach and networking efforts, PROP also acts as an advocacy organization, commenting on proposed legislation, regulatory policy, and grant and funding issues.

In response to both short and long term issues, PROP established a Recycling Strategic Planning Task Force several years ago. The Task Force is made up of both public and private sector recycling professionals and has met a number of times over the last few years to discuss the future of recycling and program sustainability in Pennsylvania.

Though the Recycling Fee has been reauthorized until the end of 2008, the Task Force still hopes to encourage recycling professionals, program administrators, and advocates to continue to build support for recycling and composting in the Commonwealth. Funding remains tight for some grant programs and we hope to help legislators understand the need for continued funding.

This tool kit is designed to help PROP members and other recycling advocates raise awareness and renew enthusiasm for recycling among local elected officials, local government associations, the Legislature, the Governor, and the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP).

Given the recent passage of Act 175 to provide money for the Recycling Fund, PROP members are encouraged to extend their enthusiastic thanks to each of their legislators for their support of reauthorization. The Legislature has listened to PROP and our concerns and it should be our goal to keep recycling and composting on their radar screen.

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The Pennsylvania State Legislature

The Pennsylvania General Assembly, much like the federal legislature, consists of two chambers. The Pennsylvania House of Representatives has 203 members representing districts of approximately 59,000 citizens each. The Pennsylvania State Senate consists of 50 members representing about 240,000 people each. Members of the House serve two year terms, while Senators serve four year terms.

While much work goes on behind the scenes, actual lawmaking happens on the floor of the two chambers. Activities on the floor can appear confusing the first time you observe them. Actually, the Legislature conducts its business according to practices and procedures that have survived for centuries. This system of government has sustained Pennsylvania and the nation for more than two centuries and remains fundamentally unchanged since the 1800s.

Majority party members in each house serve as committee chairs and make up the leadership on the floor. The majority party, consequently, is better able to control the movement of legislation that may have controversial elements on which the two major parties may disagree. It is easy to see, then, that proposed legislation enjoying bipartisan support will move through the process more quickly and have a greater chance of reaching final passage.

A typical session week lasts three days and can last a standard work day or late into the night. The floor is truly the hub of both the Senate and the House of Representatives. But what you are observing from the visitors' gallery often takes days, weeks or months of preparation, which legislators accomplish in individual meetings, phone calls, and committee meetings. So when you think of your representatives "on the job," picture them also in committee rooms evaluating bills, in caucus exchanging views about bills with members of their own party, and in their offices hearing from constituents about the merits of bills which are before them.

Input from constituents does matter. It is the reason PROP organizes Legislative Days and encourages individual members to contact their local legislators. It is in this way that each legislator recognizes that there are constituents in their own district that have strong feelings on specific issues. While input from a statewide organization has value and can act as a unified voice, input from local constituents often packs the strongest punch.

The Pennsylvania House of Representatives

Members of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives serve two year terms. Representing about a quarter of the constituents of their counterparts in the Senate, Representatives often enjoy a closer relationship with those in their district. Uniquely local issues are of even more importance to them. Any discussions or correspondence with your representative needs to keep this in mind. Emphasize the local impacts of proposed legislative actions. When discussing recycling with them, be sure to explain what good has come of previous funding and how important continued funding will be to his or her constituents.

Much work is done through the committee process. It is important to keep a pulse on what issues are hot in committee discussions and hearings. Many pieces of legislation are introduced each session but most have a hard time getting out of committee. A bill is recommended to the appropriate committee initially and may sometimes go before several committees when elements of the bill are of concern to multiple committees.

Individual parties will often introduce bills in both chambers that are essentially the same with the ultimate goal of producing compatible legislation. However, amendments, both in committee and on the floor, frequently alter the original bill. After amendments, bills passed in one chamber may be vastly different from its companion legislation in the other chamber. When this happens, the bills will go before a joint conference committee to reconcile the differences. The compromise legislation is eventually voted up or down without amendments.

Environmental Resources and Energy Committee

Majority (Room 38-B East Wing)

Chairman George, Camille Bud
Secretary Conklin, H. Scott
Subcommittee Chairs
 Energy Gerber, Michael
 Mining Wansacz, James,
 Parks/Forests Yudichak, John T.,

Bennington, Lisa
Carroll, Mike
DePasquale, Eugene
Freeman, Robert
Hornaman, John
Leach, Daylin
Levdansky, David K.
Mann, Jennifer
McGeehan, Michael P.
Seip, Tim
Vitali, Greg

Minority (Room 41-B East Wing)

Chairman Hutchinson, Scott E.,

Causer, Martin T.
Everett, Garth D.
Harper, Kate
Miller, Ron
Moyer, Jay R.
Pyle, Jeffrey P.
Rapp, Kathy L.
Reed, Dave
Ross, Chris
Rubley, Carole A.
Stevenson, Richard R.
Vulakovich, Randy

Game and Fisheries Committee

Majority (Room 225 IOB)

Chairman Staback, Edward G.,
Vice Chairman Goodman, Neal
Secretary Kula, Deberah

Daley, Peter J.
DeLuca, Anthony M.
Gergely, Marc J.
Haluska, Gary
Hanna, Michael K.
Hornaman, John
Mahoney, Tim
McGeehan, Michael P.
Readshaw, Harry
Sainato, Chris
Surra, Dan A.
Wojnaroski, Sr.,Edward P.

Minority (Room 45 East Wing)

Rohrer, Sam, Chairman

Cutler, Bryan
Denlinger, Gordon
Everett, Garth D.
Gillespie, Keith
Kauffman, Rob W.
Keller, Mark K.
Millard, David R.
Moul, Dan
Peifer, Michael
Perry, Scott
Roae, Brad
Rock, Todd

Local Government Committee

Majority (Room 27 IOB)

Chairman Freeman, Robert
Secretary Lentz, Bryan R.,
Subcommittee Chairs
 Townships Curry, Lawrence H.,
 Counties Grucela, Richard T.,
 Boroughs Harhai, R. Ted,

Casorio, James E.
Hornaman, John
Kessler, David R.
King, Chris
Kula, Deberah
Leach, Daylin
Longietti, Mark
McIlvaine Smith, Barbara
Samuelson, Steve
Siptroth, John J.
Tangretti, Thomas A.

Minority (Room 324 Main Capitol)

Chairman Saylor, Stan

Cutler, Bryan
Gingrich, Mauree
Harper, Kate
Harris, C. Adam
Helm, Susan C.
Hickernell, David S.
Keller, Mark K.
Mensch, Bob
Moyer, Jay R.
Petri, Scott A.
Ross, Chris
Steil, David J.

Tourism and Recreational Development Committee

Majority (Room 328 IOB)

Chairman Tangretti, Thomas A.,
Secretary Payton, Jr., Tony J.,
Subcommittee Chairs
 Travel Buxton, Ron,
 Recreation Pallone, John E.,
 Arts/Entertainment Sainato, Chris,

Biancucci, Vince
Costa, Paul
DeLuca, Anthony M.
Dermody, Frank
Donatucci, Robert C.
Haluska, Gary
Kotik, Nick
Longietti, Mark
Samuelson, Steve
Santoni, Jr., Dante
Yudichak, John T.

Minority (Room 312 Main Capitol)

Chairman Nailor, Jerry L.,

Creighton, Tom C.
Ellis, Brian L.
Gillespie, Keith
Harhart, Julie
Killion, Thomas H.
Millard, David R.
Moul, Dan
Payne, John D.
Scavello, Mario M.
Sonney, Curtis G.
Stevenson, Richard R.

The Pennsylvania Senate

Pennsylvania Senators serve four year terms, representing nearly a quarter of a million constituents. Though serving much larger districts than House members, it is still important to discuss the local ramifications of any legislative action. Though sometimes concerned with bigger picture issues, Senators still must answer to local voters and the voice of constituents wields considerable influence.

Like the House of Representatives, much work is done through the committee process. The dynamics of the two chambers are sometimes quite different. In recycling, solid waste, and environmental legislation debated over the last few years, the Senate has generally experienced significantly fewer committee amendments. The smaller Senate committees have generated fewer amendments than their counterparts in the House during the committee process.

Though the Environmental Resources and Energy Committee is the primary committee dealing with recycling, waste, and illegal dumping issues, several committees in both chambers discuss some aspect of recycling. When talking with Senators or Representatives, it is also worthwhile discussing issues with specific committee staff and committee members.

Pennsylvania Senate Committees

Agriculture & Rural Affairs Committee

Majority

Chair
Vice Chair
ex-Officio

Eichelberger, John H.
Folmer, Mike
Madigan, Roger A.
Punt, Terry L.

Brubaker, Michael W.,
Waugh, Michael L.,
Scarnati, III, Joseph B.,

Minority

Chair

O'Pake, Michael

Kitchen, Shirley M.
Logan, Sean
Wozniak, John N.

Appropriations Committee

Majority

Chair
Vice Chair
ex-officio
ex-officio
ex-officio

Browne, Patrick M.
Corman, Jake
Gordner, John R.
Greenleaf, Stewart J.
Madigan, Roger A.
Pippy, John
Rafferty, Jr., John C.
Regola, Bob
Rhoades, James J.
Vance, Patricia H.
Waugh, Michael L.
White, Mary Jo

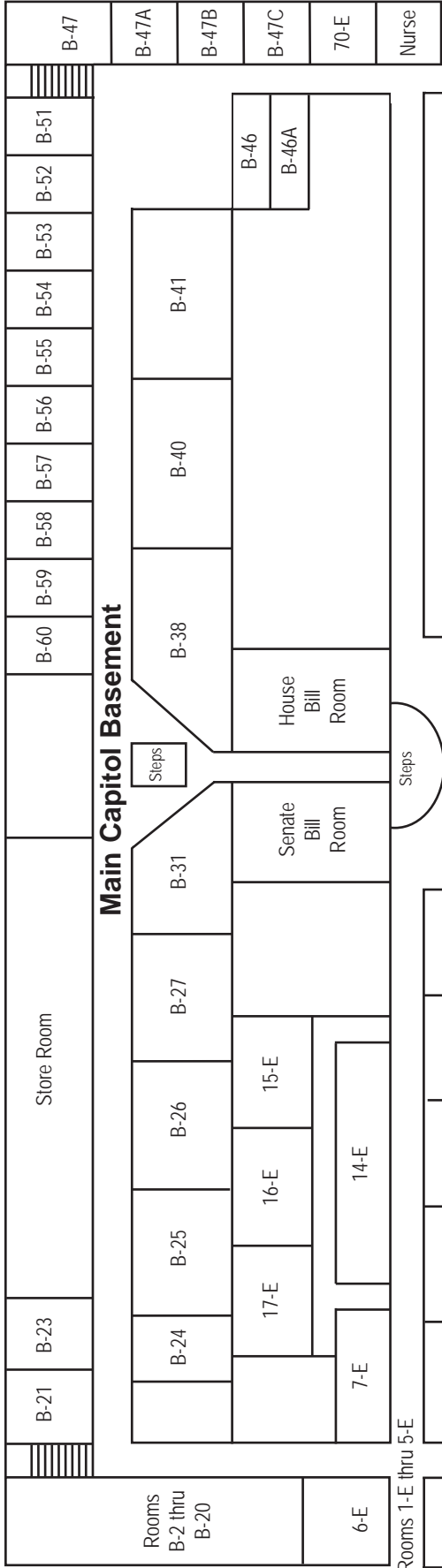
Armstrong, Gibson E.,
Tomlinson, Robert M.,
Pileggi, Dominic
Mellow, Robert J.,
Scarnati, III, Joseph B.,

Minority

Minority Chair

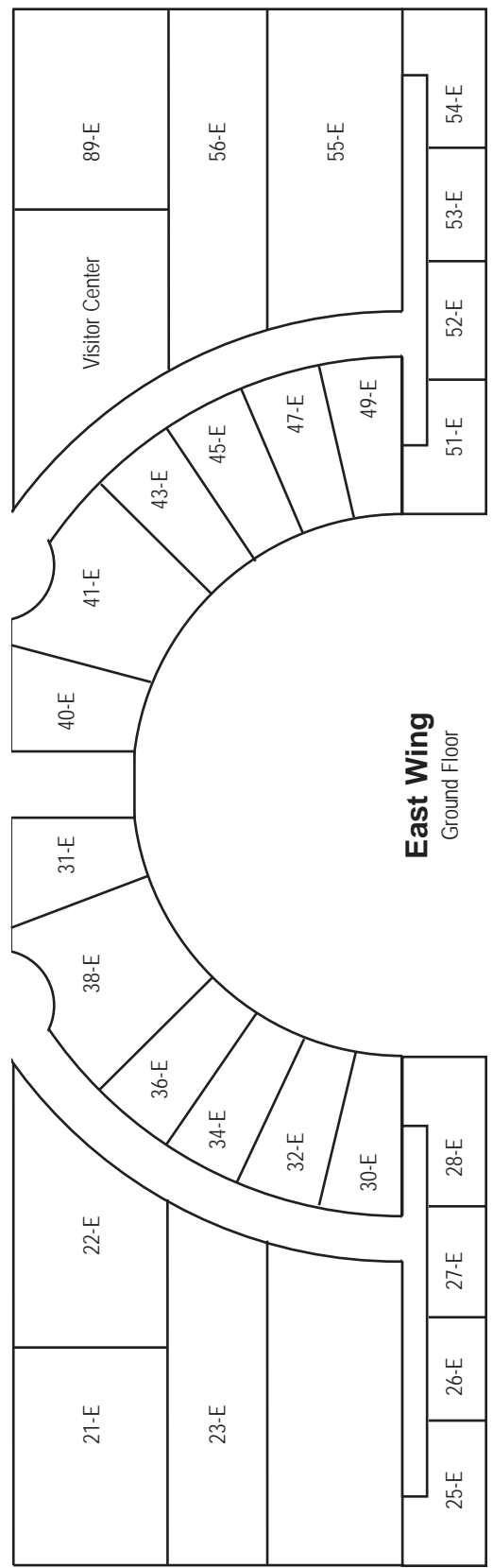
LaValle, Gerald J.,

Boscola, Lisa M.
Fumo, Vincent J.
Logan, Sean
Musto, Raphael J.
Stack, Michael J.
Stout, J. Barry
Tartaglione, Christine M.
Wozniak, John N.



→ To Rooms 1-E thru 5-E

To North Office Building
↑



Environment Resources & Energy Committee

Majority

Chair
Vice Chair
ex-officio

Brubaker, Michael W.
Greenleaf, Stewart J.
Rhoades, James J.
White, Donald C.

White, Mary Jo
Erickson, Edwin B.,
Scarnati, III, Joseph B.,

Minority

Minority Chair

Dinniman, Andrew E.
Stout, J. Barry
Williams, Anthony H.

Musto, Raphael

Game & Fisheries Committee

Majority

Chair
Vice Chair
ex-officio

Pippy, John
Robbins, Robert
Wonderling, Robert

McIlhinney, Jr., Charles T.,
Wonderling, Robert C.,
Scarnati, III, Joseph B.,

Minority

Minority Chair

Boscola, Lisa M.
Dinniman, Andrew E.
Fumo, Vincent J.

Fontana, Wayne D.,

Local Government Committee

Majority

Chair
Vice Chair
ex-officio

Brubaker, Michael W.
Rafferty, Jr., John C.
Robbins, Robert D.
Waugh, Michael L.

Regola, Bob
Eichelberger, John H.,
Scarnati, III, Joseph B.,

Minority

Minority Chair

Dinniman, Andrew E.
Fontana, Wayne D.
Williams, Constance H.

Ferlo, Jim

Public Health & Welfare Committee

Majority

Chair
Vice Chair
ex-officio

Baker, Lisa
Orie, Jane Clare
White, Mary Jo
Wonderling, Robert C.

Erickson, Edwin B.,
Vance, Patricia H.,
Scarnati, III, Joseph B.,

Minority

Minority Chair

Costa, Jay
Kitchen, Shirley M.
Washington, Leanna M.

Hughes, Vincent J.,

Joint Legislative Air and Water Pollution Conservation Committee

The Joint Conservation Committee is a bipartisan committee consisting of 18 members of the state House and Senate which conducts studies, holds hearings and makes recommendations to the General assembly on air and water pollution laws, mining practices and land reclamation.

House Members

Chair Scott E. Hutchinson

Bob Bastian
Camille George
Richard Grucela
Julie Harhart
Scott Petri
Thomas C. Petrone
Greg Vitali

Senate Members

Chair Musto, Raphael J.,

James Ferlo
John R. Gordner
Richard A. Kasunic
Roger A. Madigan
John R. Pippy
Mary Jo White
Robert C. Wonderling
John N. Wozniak

Communicating Effectively With Your Legislator

Communicating with your legislator is not rocket science. Due to the volume of material that an elected official reads, it is important to follow some simple rules. Here are some tips to consider as you ponder how to become a valued resource to elected officials.

More is not better unless they ask for it. **Effective written communications are accurate, brief, clear, timely, and followed with a phone call.** What is the most important nugget you want the elected official to remember about your cause? Do not cloud that issue with a lot of flowery window dressing. He/she should have no question about what you are trying to communicate. Example: "The loss of Act 101 funding would significantly impact popular and successful recycling and composting in our district. Please support reauthorization of the funding."

Top ranking communications with elected officials: Spontaneous letters from constituents, office visits from consultants, articles in state/district newspapers, telephone calls from opinion leaders, research services, and telephone calls from constituents. Do not rely solely on your state and/or national organization to carry your water. **All politics are local. Your elected officials want to hear from their constituents.** Second to accuracy, elected officials want to know that the issue is important to the people that vote them into office.

Your letter to the elected official: Use personal letterhead, restrict correspondence to one page, communicate in your own words, ask the elected official to reply with their position on your issue, do not use a threatening tone, do not overstate your influence, be certain the letter arrives ahead of the vote and always say thank you. Personal letters mean much more than mass-produced propaganda, particularly when the elected official can trace the correspondence to a constituent. You have more clout than you might think!

Threats do not work on you; do not think they help your cause, either. **Even if the elected official does not agree with your position, be polite and say thank you.** You will probably have the occasion to need them again. There is no value to burning bridges.

Do not use partisanship. Your political affiliation is only valid at the poll. Your challenge is to work as best as you can with the person currently in office.

Now go out and find a reason to communicate with your elected official. They want to hear from you!

Portions of this section were taken from an article published by the Pennsylvania Association of Non-Profit Organizations (PANO) and is reprinted here with permission. Visit www.pano.org for the dates and locations of "Building a Relationship With Your Elected Official" workshops and other valuable information.

News Updates

PROP's initial efforts to garner long term support of recycling in Pennsylvania are focusing on educating legislators on the economic and environmental benefits of recycling, composting, waste reduction, and proper disposal. There is no better way to accomplish this goal than by improving the exchange of information with your legislator. Add legislators and/or their staffs to your mailing lists for news updates or newsletters. Though many legislators may not actually read your updates, staffers or legislative research offices might take a look at them. Even the presence of your logo in their mailboxes increases visibility and general awareness of the issues. When you send the first newsletter or news release, be sure to let the legislator know why you have included him or her on your mailing list. The more your legislator hears good news about recycling in his/her legislative district, the more likely he/she will be to vote favorably on the subject in the future.

Letters and E-Mails

Letters and e-mails can be another effective way to improve communications with your legislator. The tone of your letter may be very formal or quite informal, depending on your relationship with the legislator. Many recycling professionals have come to know some legislators on a first name basis and may have the liberty of communicating with them in an informal basis. When in doubt, always take the more formal approach, so as not to offend the elected official.

Consider dropping a line to the elected official every time you have a notable conversation. It is beneficial to follow up with a written response to confirm and reinforce what you said in your discussion. It also gives the legislator something to place in his file for future reference on the subject.

These kinds of follow-ups may also be sometimes well suited to an e-mail response. But know your legislator. Some do not use e-mail as extensively as others and it's important to recognize that. Do not be afraid to ask the receptionist, secretary, or staffer what makes the most sense for their boss. Staff correspondence is frequently best addressed by e-mail. Just use your e-mail with discretion. If you send correspondence too frequently you run the risk of being victimized by a quick finger to the delete button before your message is ever read.

Meetings and Events

Meet with your legislator whenever the opportunity presents itself. Many have local office hours and encourage constituents to visit with them. Like your written correspondence, approach the meeting with the degree of formality that seems most appropriate. Be brief and to the point and remember to emphasize the local ramifications.

Don't be afraid to invite legislators to events that you organize. Open houses, award ceremonies, presentations, cleanups, and similar events are often attractive to them. While they may frequently decline, you may be occasionally surprised. Politicians like to show their constituents that they are paying attention and recycling and cleanup efforts are always positive and seldom controversial events. Be sure to recognize them when they do make it and follow-up with a thank you note.

Building Support Through Local Constituents

Building Support

PROP and other statewide organizations play an important role in advocacy and lobbying. They are only a part of a complete legislative outreach effort. The old saying that, “All politics is local,” holds very true when dealing with the state legislature. Each of us needs to build a broad base of local support, empowering many of our local politicians, government staff, grassroots organizations, businesses, and individuals to be advocates of recycling.

Though much of this section focuses on empowering local government, it is also important to get businesses and recycling advocates involved. Keep publicizing the positives that have come from your recycling efforts and encourage advocates to speak out to both local and state government officials. The recently completed study by the Northeast Recycling Council (NERC) showed that recycling has had a significant impact on Pennsylvania’s economy; everyone needs to hear that message.

Local and State Government Connections

Local governments have great power in the state of Pennsylvania. Remember that the recycling requirements of Act 101 fall squarely on the shoulders of local municipalities and they should be a loud voice to legislators. Each of us must try to encourage others to speak up for recycling.

- Talk with other local government officials, especially elected officials.
- Build on already established relationships. If a local government official talks with a legislator often, ask him or her to mention recycling issues when the opportunity presents itself.
- Stress the implications of the lapsing of Act 101 funding to local governments. Curbside recycling becomes an unfunded mandate if the funding is not available.

Educating Local Officials

An important part of this effort is educating local government officials. In much the same way we encouraged you to communicate with your legislators, we hope that you will enhance communication with both your elected officials and neighboring local governments.

Encourage local government officials to let their state associations know that this issue is of importance. The Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors (PSATS), the Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs (PSAB), The Pennsylvania Municipal Authorities Association (PMAA), and County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania (CCAP) have all participated in PROP’s Recycling Task Force discussions and need to hear from their members to cement their support.

Helping Local Officials

Both elected and appointed local government officials are wearing a number of hats and may not be able to spend a lot of time communicating with legislators. It’s important to do what you can to facilitate that communication.

- Write joint letters when practical.
- Write a model letter so they do not have to write one from scratch.
- Use e-mail to keep them informed and give them background for their own calls or letters.
- Send polite reminders when notes or calls need to be made to legislators
- Let them know who the best contacts are in the legislature and the press.

PROpositions: The Future of Recycling

Background

The Municipal Waste Planning, Recycling, and Waste Reduction Act (Act 101 of 1988) addresses a wide variety of solid waste and recycling issues intended to reduce waste and enhance recycling in the Commonwealth. Among other provisions, it mandated curbside recycling collection in communities of more than 10,000 or those larger than 5,000 with a population density of 300 people per square mile. Act 101 also established a \$2.00 per ton fee on every ton of municipal solid waste disposed of in Pennsylvania. The Recycling Fund created by this fee supported several grant programs to provide performance incentives, recycling education and processing and collection equipment.

Funding

The original act provided for ten years of grant funding and two subsequent laws extended funding to October 2004. Act 175 was introduced to provide funding through 2009. Then, in late 2006 House Bill 1902 was passed, which extended the sunset fee through 2012. Income from the landfill fee is now more than \$45 million annually, about half of which comes from the flood of out-of-state waste disposed of in the Commonwealth. Legislation was passed in 1999 authorizing a withdrawal of up to \$25 million annually for the "Growing Greener" grant initiative. The Fund also supports several other worthwhile waste management and recycling programs, including tire recycling, pollution prevention, hazardous waste, illegal dumping, littering, and cleanup and prevention of dumps in state parks and forests.

Impact of the Program

In addition to these peripheral programs, the Act provides funding for solid waste planning (through Section 901); education, containers, and equipment (Section 902); county recycling coordinators (Section 903); performance incentive grants (Section 904); and landfill host municipal inspectors. These programs have helped build a public and private sector recycling infrastructure that has raised the state's recycling diversion rate somewhere between 25% and 32%, depending on what materials are included.

Studies completed by the National Recycling Coalition (NRC) and the Northeast Recycling Council (NERC) show there are also significant economic benefits that can be traced back to the recycling and reuse industries. Recycling-related businesses employ more than 81,000 Pennsylvanians with an annual payroll of nearly \$3 billion. The 3,200 businesses generate sales receipts in excess of \$18 billion each year.

Current Issues

Even though the recent reauthorization of recycling fees has been a positive development, grant demand and inflation have made those grant funds more challenging to secure. Coupled with the disappearance of County Waste Management Fees, there is still an air of uncertainty among public sector recycling coordinators.

The value of comprehensive waste management must be conveyed to all Pennsylvanians. Recycling is part of a comprehensive management strategy that should reduce waste production, illegal dumping, waste accumulation, open burning, littering, and other improper disposal practices. This remains one of the most overlooked quality of life issues in Pennsylvania. It cannot be addressed without planning, funding, and a firm commitment from business and industry, county, municipal and state government. The legislature should consider legislation to require all Pennsylvanians to have waste collection, curb waste accumulation and illegal dumping, and strengthen and clarify restrictions on open burning.

Pennsylvania has built a strong recycling industry, an industry that brings significant tax and sales revenues to the Commonwealth. Continued growth of this worthwhile industry requires support of the infrastructure that made it possible. Without funding and the support of the legislature, future growth will be stymied. Support the service your residents demand. Support recycling in Pennsylvania.

Inquiries from legislators or legislative staff are welcomed and may be addressed to PROP Executive Director, John Frederick at 814-742-7777 or by e-mail at jfrederick@proprecycles.org.

