



Office of Planning and Environmental Management

As you're aware, recent legislative changes to the Solid Waste Management Act have significantly changed planning requirements for local government solid waste management. The changes brought by Senate Bill 157 remove DCA and the Regional Commissions from the process of reviewing and approving solid waste management plans. Plans are still required, but they can be locally developed and implemented with no third-party review.

The new legislation, which became effective on July 1, 2011, mandates local governments' plans and updates, whether local, multi-jurisdictional or regional, must at a minimum:

- provide for 10 years of collection capability and disposal capacity from the date of completion of the plan,
- enumerate the solid waste handling facilities as to size and type, and
- identify those sites which are not suitable for solid waste handling facilities based on environmental and land use factors.

Any city or county that proposes to update or amend its solid waste management plan must publish notice in the county legal organ of the city's or county's Internet Web site, as applicable, at least two weeks prior to adopting such update or amendment.

The solid waste survey that DCA administers is now optional, though DCA strongly encourages local governments to continue participating in this survey. DCA staff is simplifying the survey, in hopes that governments will continue to provide this data which is very valuable in maintaining Georgia's strong recycled materials economy.

In light of the legislative changes outlined above, DCA has removed the online listings of local governments deemed ineligible for solid waste-related grants, loans and permits. Because the legislation stipulates a 10 year timeframe for planning collection capability and disposal capacity, DCA intends, as a courtesy, to track this timeframe and notify local governments of these approaching expiration dates.

The legislation further directs DCA to develop solid waste planning guidance that local governments may use to update or amend their solid waste management plans. This guidance is currently being developed, and will be formally announced later this summer. DCA is investigating development of an incentive program to encourage local governments to go beyond the minimum requirements of the new law. We are also developing workshops that will be offered on an ongoing basis, to assist local governments in keeping up with the latest techniques and best practices for solid waste management and recycling in their community.

Finally, the legislation requires owners of municipal solid waste landfills, (including Construction and Demolition landfills, a subset of MSW landfills) to report to DCA annually. DCA is developing a timeframe for this reporting and the exact information needed. Because some of the information is already collected by the Department of Natural Resources, Environmental Protection Division, DCA may be able to obtain the needed information from DNR to avoid double-reporting by the local governments.

For more information, please contact Joe Dunlop, DCA Office of Planning and Environmental Management, at 404-276-5193 or joe.dunlop@dca.ga.gov.