



Preserving Resources,  
Preventing Waste

# The New Jersey WasteWise Bulletin

Newsletter of the New Jersey WasteWise Business Network – Winter 2021  
WasteWise ... improving your bottom line and the environment  
through waste reduction, recycling and recycled product procurement.

## Save Our Seas 2.0 Legislation Enacted

While recycling legislation is typically passed at the state level, a new law that addresses recycling - the "Save Our Seas 2.0" law - was enacted at the national level in December 2020. The primary focus of Save Our Seas 2.0 is to reduce plastic pollution in the environment, especially waterways, through innovative clean-up programs and through investments in recycling infrastructure.

The legislation calls for the Environmental Protection Agency to develop a national strategy (within one year of the passage of the act) to improve post-consumer materials management and recycling infrastructure in the United States. In support of this endeavor, the law establishes a "Post-Consumer Materials Management Infrastructure Grant Program" that will provide grants to states to implement the new national recycling strategy. A total of \$275 million in recycling grant funds will be made available over the next five years. Among other measures, a "genius prize" will also be established for innovations that tackle marine debris.

## Plastic Waste Spreads to All Corners of the Earth

Tristan da Cunha is known as the most remote inhabited location on Earth. Despite being separated from any neighbors by thousands of miles of ocean, this isolated British island territory in the south Atlantic Ocean is being negatively impacted by the ever-increasing amount of plastic waste that finds its way into the planet's waterways and oceans. A recent study showed that the presence of marine debris, such as plastic

bottles, fishing-related items and film on the beaches and in the waters of Tristan da Cunha had increased by more than tenfold over the past decade. Microplastics were also found to be abundant in the Atlantic Ocean in this isolated region. Furthermore, the study found that of 2,243 animals had ingested plastics at high rates. Learn more about plastic pollution in our waterways at <https://www.epa.gov/trash-free-waters/plastic-pollution>.

## China Expands Import Ban on Recyclables

As of January 1, 2021, China is no longer accepting what they characterize as "solid waste," but actually are various types of source separated recyclable materials. Included in this ban are recyclable paper (fiber) grades, which have been significant export materials for the U.S. recycling industry for decades. With almost 1.9 million short tons of recyclable paper shipped to China from the United States during the third quarter of 2020, the expanded ban will result in a further disruption in the worldwide recycling market and may lead to some difficult times for the recycling community in the months ahead.

On a positive note, the recycling industry has been wisely moving away from the Chinese recycling market over the past few years knowing that this expanded ban was on the horizon and learning from experience gained from China's other recent stringent import restrictions and bans. Thus, the impact of the new ban may not be as severe as the impact from previous import policy changes enacted by China. The expanded ban does not include recycled paper pulp, which is a commodity favored by Chinese paper manufacturers, who have been investing in new U.S. pulping operations over the past few years.

## JoAnn Gemenden to Take the Reins at NJ Clean Communities

The New Jersey Clean Communities Council recently announced that JoAnn Gemenden will be the program's new Executive Director as of March 1 this year. She will be taking the reins from Sandy Huber, who will be retiring after 17 years with the program. Ms. Gemenden is not only highly qualified but is also a familiar and friendly face in the New Jersey litter prevention/cleanup and recycling community. She is currently the long-time county recycling coordinator for Union County, a member of the Association of New Jersey Recyclers, President of the Association of New Jersey Household Hazardous Waste Coordinators, a member of the Elizabeth Green Team and has served on the Clean Communities Council Board of Trustees.

Sandy Huber has led the Clean Communities program since its inception and will be missed by all who have worked with her and known her over the years. Her dedication to New Jersey's environment and citizenry is truly commendable.

## "Green" New Year's Resolutions for 2021

Remember to include the environment in your New Year's resolutions! Consider adopting the following easy and beneficial green strategies this year:

**Reduce Waste and Recycle** – Reduce waste by purchasing used items, products with less packaging and reusable items. Make sure to recycle the materials that are collected in your local program.

**Conserve Water** – Watch your water usage by turning off faucets when not in use, taking shorter showers and avoiding unnecessary water consumption.

**Save Energy** – Use less energy by turning off appliances when not in use, switching to energy saving bulbs and investing in energy saving appliances.

## Did You Know...

- Burger King is teaming up with TerraCycle's Loop™ program, a circular packaging service, at select restaurants in New York City, Portland and Tokyo. The pilot program will allow customers to return zero waste sandwich containers and beverage cups to the restaurant for cleaning and reuse.
- Evian eliminated the labels from their water bottles as a waste reduction measure. The company also set a goal to have all its bottles made from 100 percent recycled plastic by 2025.
- Cycle Dog, a company based in Portland, Oregon, transforms used bicycle inner tubes into hand-sewn dog collars, leashes, collapsible dog bowls, park pick-up pouches and more. For details, visit <https://cycledog.com/>.
- Waste management is the largest source of non-energy greenhouse gas emissions in New Jersey. This calculation does not include the collection and transportation of waste, nor the electricity required to power waste management facilities.
- Switzerland's "Pay-as-You-Throw" trash management system - a program where residents pay for trash services per unit of waste collected rather than through a fixed fee - has resulted in a doubling of the country's recycling rate over the past 20 years.
- The Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries annual "Design for Recycling® Award" recognizes the proactive steps made by manufacturers who have actively incorporated Design for Recycling® principles into their products and manufacturing processes. Learn more at <https://www.isri.org/about-isri/awards/design-for-recycling>.
- Consumers can recycle broken holiday lights at <https://www.holidayleds.com/free-light-recycling>.



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